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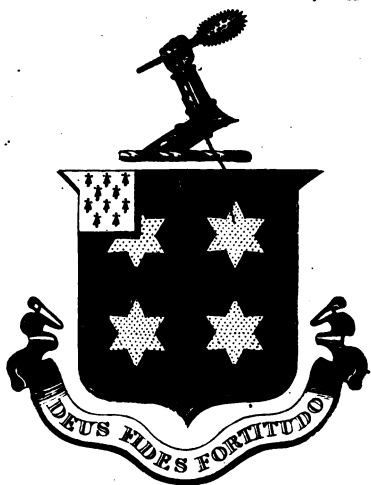
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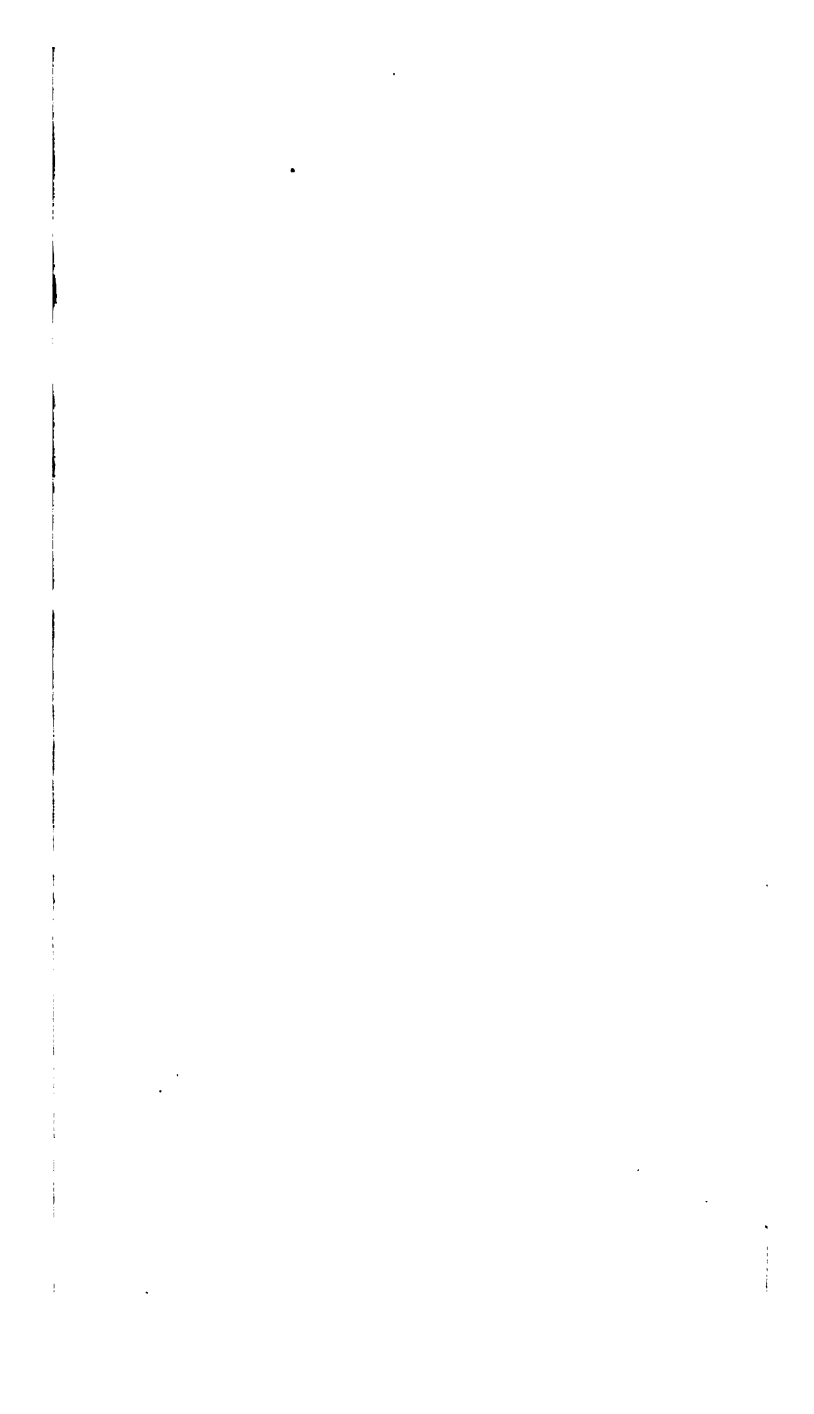
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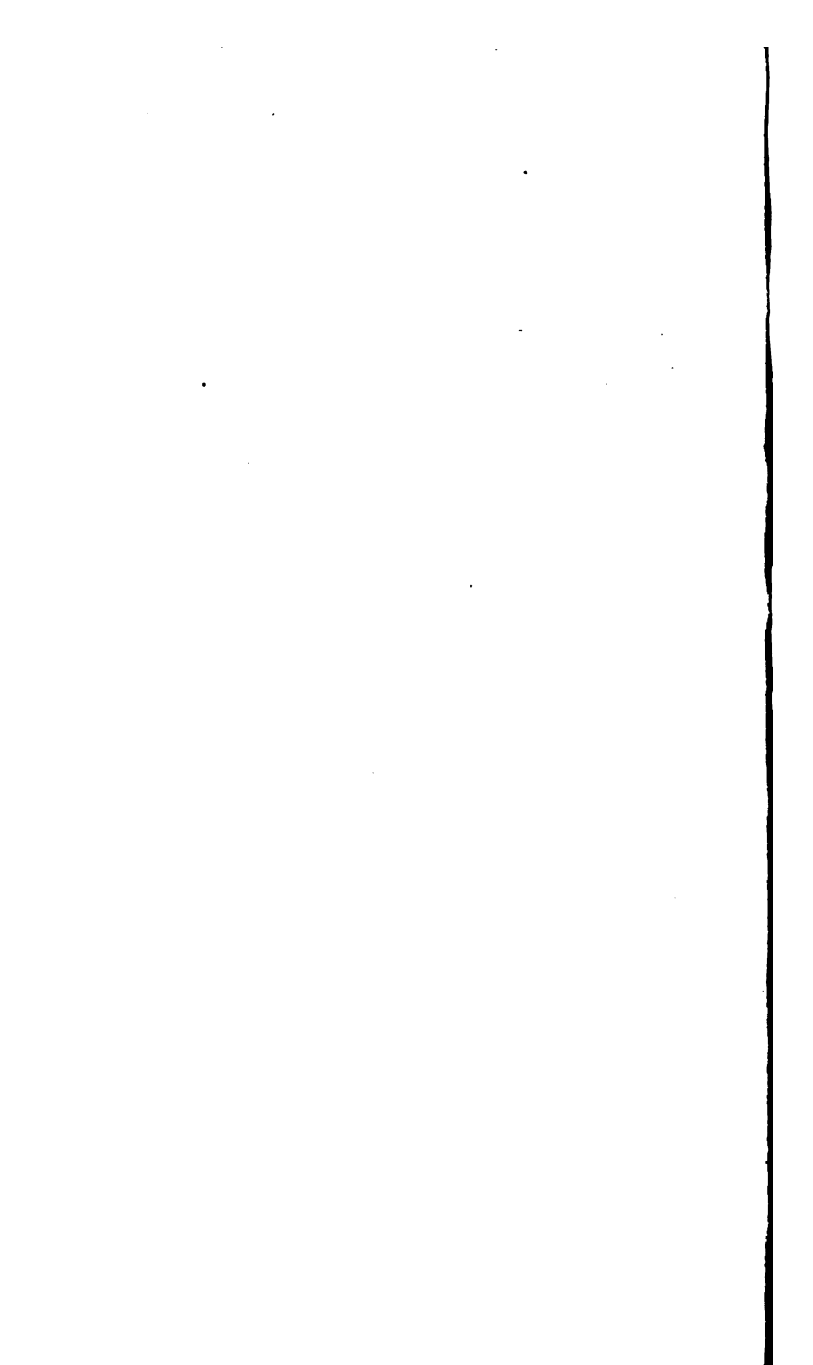


Thomas Westwood.

ANNEX

PLATE





THE
FIELD SPORTS OF FRANCE.

THE
FIELD SPORTS OF FRANCE.

BEING A PRACTICAL VIEW
OF HUNTING, SHOOTING AND FISHING,
ON THE CONTINENT.

Containing, much local information, and numerous useful hints, for sporting tourists; some curious and characteristic anecdotes, angler's songs, etc., etc., and a concise notice of the habits and instincts of the several animals in question, together with a sufficient sketch of the game and piscatory laws of France, for the guidance of British sportsmen.

BY
R. O'CONNOR, ESQ^r,
BARRISTER AT LAW.

SECOND EDITION, EXTENSIVELY ILLUSTRATED.



LONDON, JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
PARIS, STASSIN ET XAVIER, RUE DU COQ-SAINT-HONORÉ.

MDCCCXLVII.

FIVE

NINE



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JUL 1872
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THE FOLLOWING PAGES

ARE INSCRIBED

TO

JOHN ROGERS, Esq^r,

OF CONINGSBY,

IN THE COUNTY OF LINCOLN,

BY HIS FRIEND

THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.

If “ the British sportsman ” were received in France as he is in Bavaria , where M^r Parisel , the inspector at Bruckenau waits upon all visiters , to consult their tastes and pleasures , and tenders permission to shoot and fish in the extensive royal demesnes in its vicinity,* a guide to the field sports of France would be unnecessary ; but on the contrary, it is with the utmost difficulty, and after much time has been wasted in making fruitless enquiries , that he can obtain any useful local information.

The French sportsmen are not very communicative on these topics, and the rest of the community seem to know very little about the matter.

* *Dr Granville's Spas of Germany*, p. 406.

The plan and arrangement of this little work will be found extremely simple, and calculated, it is presumed, to place the subject before the reader, in a clear and satisfactory manner.

It is divided into three parts : the 1st part treats of hunting; the 2^d part, of shooting; and the 3^d part of fishing.

Sufficient information is given to enable the British sportsman to form a correct view of the manner in which his *confrères* on the continent hunt, shoot and fish; and also to guide him to those localities where each sport may be enjoyed in its greatest perfection.

To this is added a succinct notice of such of the habits and instincts of the several animals in question, as every sportsman should be familiarly acquainted with, or as are in themselves curious or interesting; together with a sketch of the game and piscatory laws of France. It indeed appears absolutely necessary that a sportsman who visits a foreign country, should have some general acquaintance with its game and piscatory laws, and

with the manner in which they are administered ; as he cannot without such knowledge, either keep out of scrapes , or ascertain the best mode of extricating himself from any , in which he may unwittingly become involved.

The great demand for this little work having rendered a second Edition desirable , it has been very considerably improved and extensively, as well as usefully illustrated, and will it is hoped be found available as a guide book for British sportsmen , in their rambles through France. The Angler will find an alphabetical table of the several rivers mentioned, in page xxii, with a reference to the pages in part third , in which directions are given for fishing them respectively , which will enable him at once to select the best fishing stations , and to proceed to them without waste of time. As most Anglers contrive to squeeze out a few notes of some favourite air , and have such peculiar opportunities of making the experiment, without offending their more sensitive neighbours, I have given them a few songs on fishing topics,

with appropriate airs for each (see page xxiv) without prejudice however to their adopting any other they may prefer, whether it may happen to suit the metre, or not ; a matter perhaps of slight importance. Indeed a friend of mine who is exceedingly fond of singing has but one air for an endless variety of songs and insists that, having a particular air for each is mere affectation—however as these airs have been selected by an eminent musician, I consider myself free from blame, whether my *confrères* succeed, or not, in singing them.

St-Omer, May 1847.

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It is worth notice that the S'-Omer anglers commenced fly fishing this season (1847) in the river *Aa* in the month of April , in cold rainy weather , and had most excellent sport. The angler* who appears to have had the most success , killed 19 good fish on the 19th instant at Lumbres common, in little more than three hours , with the *March brown fly* , though his fishing was unfortunately interrupted, when the fish were running freely, by the loss of his casting line and tackle , and by his being obliged to make a new fly. He also killed five very fine fish averaging *a pound and a quarter* each, in the same river at the pont Ardennes, with the minnow, on the 25th instant.



* Robert Parkinson , Esq^r.

ANGLER'S SONGS.

Of all the Angler's cherrish'd store.	
Air. * <i>There's nae luck about the house.</i>	255
The lordly pike in ambush lies.	
Air. <i>My lodging is on the cold ground.</i>	295
Say can the finny tribe portray.	
Air. <i>The merry swiss boy.</i>	309
Of all the frisky fussy chaps.	
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ERRATA.

In page 314, last line, for *gol eath'r* read *go leath'r*.
 In page 317, line 3, the comma should be after *thoughtless*, not after *ev'ry*.

* Omitted by mistake in page 255.

FIELD SPORTS OF FRANCE.

CHAPTER I.

Passports, how obtained—Some, preferable to others—A narrow escape with one—*Permis de chasse*, when requisite—How obtained—Small change essential in the rural districts—How to procure it.

Those who visit the continent, whether they come to participate in the gaieties of Paris, or to ramble in search of amusement through the rural districts of France, must be provided with passports, and should obtain them, before they leave London, at the office of the French ambassador, n° 6, Poland street, Oxford street, where they are gratuitously delivered. Those which are granted

in the provincial towns of France answer sufficiently well, for a mere sporting excursion; but the authorities of neighbouring countries always refuse to countersign them: they expire in a year, cost two francs, and occasion some delay and inconvenience in procuring them.

I once lost considerable time by one of these treacherous annuals, the expiration of which had accidentally escaped my observation. On my arrival at the gates of Lille it was seized by a species of undertaker who, very gravely, transmitted it to the *bureau des passe-ports, en ville*, for interment. The *employés* of that very *triste* office were then engaged in the celebration of the funeral fête of the lamented duke of Orleans, and the remains of my defunct guardian were detained, pending the performance of that solemn rite. When all was over, an officer, in the gaudy uniform of the *garde nationale* of that ancient town, teeming with military honours of every tint in the rainbow, came to my relief, and, being a *wee bit* too elevated to bestow a thought upon such undignified minutiae, most politely handed me my passport, and released me from a very anxious and painful state of suspense, as I feared that I should have had to retrace my steps, and to have travelled back under the *surveillance* of the police.

If your object be shooting, your first step must be to procure a *permis de chasse*, which is analogous to our shooting license. It is obtained by an application at the office of the mayor, in whatever town you may chance to be. The mayor cannot grant a *permis de chasse*, but he will forward your application for one to the *prefet* of the *département*, who will immediately grant and transmit it to the *bureau des contributions directes*, in such town, where it will be delivered to you, on payment of twenty five francs.

Formerly the *permis de chasse*, was grantable only to certain privileged classes : but these unfair, humiliating, and vexatious distinctions, no longer exist. The *chasseur roturier* is now as much at liberty to shoot partridges (if he can), as his aristocratic neighbour, provided *he fork out the blunt* to the above mentioned very reasonable extent.

In conclusion, let me offer you a little advice on the important subject of *small change* for which a sportsman has such frequent occasion *en route*. The current silver coin of France consists of pieces of five francs, two francs, one franc, ten sous and five sous : the copper coin is perhaps the most wretched in Europe. The general mode in which bankers give change for English money is in five franc pieces. Care should, therefore, be taken

to obtain , at least , a few pounds in francs , half francs, and five sou pieces. The French bankers always have them made up in nice rolls of 100—50 and 25 francs each , and will give them ; if demanded. This precaution will prevent the loss of much time in searching for change to pay small bills , as well as the disagreeable necessity of carrying a pocket full of sous which, rather resemble old buttons than money, and which , are so worn and sharp at the edges , that they would cut their way through a meal sack : besides it enables an angler to reward a *gamin* , for disentangling his flies when they are fastened in a willow branch upon the opposite side of a stream , or for catching a mayfly, or a grasshopper , with something under a five franc piece which, some economical people might consider rather too much for his trouble , and most anglers like to purchase their grasshoppers *à bon marché*.

CHAPTER II.

Permis de chasse demandable by whom—The village mayor—His jurisdiction and judicial proceedings—The *garde-champêtre*, his duty and habits—The *garde-chasse*, a mere servant—The *gendarmes*, respectable men.

The mayor and his assistant or deputy, the *garde-champêtre* or *forestier*, and the *gendarmes* are the only persons who are invested with legal authority to demand the production of your *permis de chasse*. The *garde-chasse*, being merely the gamekeeper of a private individual, has no such power.

Sportsmen may be brought before the mayor of the *commune* in which they are found shooting upon any charge of irregularity or trespass : this person exercises a summary jurisdiction over all such petty disputes as arise within his district : but, as you will scarcely ever meet him in the field, and must act with considerable imprudence to incur the necessity of paying him a visit *chez lui*, it is not necessary to say more of him in this place.

The village mayor is generally an industrious farmer, not overburthened with erudition, legal or otherwise : he will, nevertheless, hear your statement with becoming gravity and decide against you with very little hesitation. Comply with his decree, and thank your stars that matters are no worse.

The *gardes-champêtres* are the persons with whom a sportsman is most likely to come in contact : they have nothing whatever to do with the preservation of the game, and are merely appointed to protect the crops within their respective localities. They are usually quite willing to *listen to reason*.

L'ouverture de la chasse is their jubilee, and, in consideration of a few francs kindly bestowed, they seldom fail to point out the best haunts in their respective ranges, generously assuming that

You are too considerate to injure any of the precious crops intrusted to their faithful keeping. You cannot, therefore, be too courteous to these persons: they are great lovers of a *goutte*, tobacco, cigars, and two franc pieces: in short, they will accept of whatever you may offer, rather than run the risk of displeasing you. But being exceedingly conscientious, which is their weak point, they will, when matters are properly adjusted, retire into some convenient wood, or lie down in a clover field, and actually fall asleep, lest they might, by any chance, see you scampering through the uncut wheat, or beans, after a wild dog, or thrashing them out, in a fruitless effort to spring a timid quail.

In the vine districts the *gardes-champêtres* are assisted by the *messiers*, who are persons sworn in before the *juge-de-paix*, for the special purpose of protecting the vine-yards, during the grape season. They are generally great poachers, and destroy a considerable quantity of game, nor will they be found one whit less obliging than their considerate *chef*, and may be dealt with in the same manner.

The *garde-chasse* is not always quite so accommodating; but he is not wholly devoid of redeeming qualities, and will, occasionally, be found

to possess the powerful organ of acquisitiveness to such an overwhelming extent that , in spite of his best efforts to resist temptation , he yields to the pressure of a five franc piece. You may perhaps be no craniologist , or , even if you are initiated in that wonderful science , you may not like to run a nice pair of new kid gloves through his greasy locks in search of the requisite protuberance, and, if so, you must adopt some other course; *par exemple* : Begin with a *goutte* : The *garde-chasse* , with the genuine protuberance , never declines a *goutte*. Some keen sportsmen cannot converse with the *garde-chasse* without tossing five franc pieces in the air , and catching them , as they fall , just as if they did not know what to do with them , which is a curious propensity , and which they call *tickling him* : it is strange , nay almost incredible , how much , the *garde-chasse* sometimes resembles that beautiful model of a trustworthy public servant , the *garde-champêtre* , whom I have already introduced to your notice , without , I trust , saying anything too fulsome , in his praise. Those who deprecate all undue protection of the agricultural interest , must consider him a very sound politician , as well as a very estimable personage :

The *gendarmes* are chiefly supplied from the

French army , and from the better class of industrious farmers. They are generally men of excellent character. They discharge their duty in a quiet and respectful manner. I have never heard any sportsmen complain of them. They merely demand the production of your *permis de chasse* which you must always have about you on these occasions , for , if not , it is optional with them , either to take down your name and address , in order to ascertain whether you have taken out one or not , or to march you into town , upon the supposition that you really have none , which would be neither agreeable nor genteel; and, there-



fore , in such cases , it behoves you to conciliate

their good opinion by a respectful and gentlemanly demeanour , which is no where exacted , with more punctiliousness than in France, because the French are naturally a very courteous , polite people , and , at once , attribute impoliteness to intentional disrespect which they are not very remarkable for submitting to , either nationally or individually.

CHAPTER III.

Norman hounds described—Their perfections—Not so sagacious as Irish beagles incontestably proved—Best time for partridge shooting in France—What dogs necessary—French chasseurs, filthy and obtrusive—The battue system—French guns, powder, shot and copper caps considered—A curious portrait painter—Rural scenery in France very fine, and little known. French peasantry, their kindness and good feeling—Strong resemblance to the Irish—Their habitations, etc.,—Russian peasantry, a wretched and degraded people—An extraordinary French marriage—How to dress grass-hoppers, and how to eat them—Matters deserving notice—Vegetable, fish and fowl markets—Charlatan—Jardin de la Gaité—Concerts—Cirque équestre—Advice to persons coming to reside in France—The unreserved manners of the French illustrated by an anecdote.

This little work offers, to the British sportsman, an introduction to the field sports of France ; fur-

nishes him with a sketch of the manner in which hunting , shooting and fishing are conducted on the continent , and affords him the means of determining what he can attain by a sporting excursion in France , whether he take with him his gun , or his fishing rod , or wishes to mingle in the joyous chase.

It would be impossible to travel over the entire surface of this extensive country and to render anything like a faithful account of the game and fish , or of the best stations for hunting , shooting and fishing in each *département* : Instead , therefore , of pretending to execute so impracticable a task , I have adopted the more eligible , but less ostentatious , course of submitting to my readers such available information as my long residence in France , great experience in the field , and trustworthy communications from numerous sporting friends , have enabled me to collect , and content myself with directing them to certain localities where they will unquestionably find the most comfortable accommodations , and abundance of sport.

With such information before him , the British sportsman may consult his own peculiar taste , select some congenial station , and reach his destination with less trouble , fatigue or inconvenience , than he must heretofore have encountered in visit-

ing the mountains of Wales , or the Fens of Lincolnshire.

If, gentle reader, you are a hunting sportsman, you may here join in the pursuit of the stag, the wolf or the boar, and calculate upon being received by your brethren with urbanity and kindness : you must, however, never fail to *request permission* to join in the chase, which will always be most freely granted. But if, on the contrary, you disregard those formalities prescribed by the invariable usage of this polite nation, and act as if you came to take their forests by storm, you must not be surprised if you are taken for, and treated as, a *boar*; and you will soon learn, when we enter on the business of boar hunting, how very unceremoniously they deal with boars in France.

You cannot in any part of Europe meet with finer packs of hounds than those of France. The Norman hounds are proverbially excellent, and enjoy the highest reputation amongst our best hunting sportsmen. They are compact, square built dogs; something smaller than our harriers; but they are extremely beautiful; have remarkably handsome heads, large flowing ears and peculiarly fine countenances. It is the prevailing opinion that they are not so fleet as English hounds, but they are said to be much deeper tongued, and, therefore,

heard much more distinctly at great distances.



This seeming superiority may perhaps be attributable to the circumstance that the Norman packs are much stonger than ours , and that their harmonious cry is borne upon the thousand echoes of those forests where they usually hunt : every sportsman knows the thrilling effect of the cry of hounds when hunting in such localities.

It is also said , that the Norman hounds are peculiarly well nosed, and that, like our inimitable beagles , they are scarcely ever at fault. I cannot, however, admit that they possess either the dexterity or sagacity of the Irish basket beagle which, you may perhaps be aware, is the smallest, sweetest toned, and most indefatigable hunter in existence.



A celebrated Irish sportsman, who keeps a few couple of these interesting little animals for hare hunting in his beautiful Demesne, assured me, that they once accidentally met with a stray fox, and, much to his astonishment, hunted him. The fox made no exertion to get clear of their company, but led them, in a quiet canter, to a moderately high part of the Demesne wall, where he, no doubt, meant to impound, and take leave of the whole party: but he was mistaken (as calculating people sometimes are), for, just when in the act of rising at the leap, three couple of these sagacious little animals most dexterously caught hold of his bushy tail, and were safely landed on the opposite side, where they continued the chase until he was compelled to take refuge in a neighbouring earth.

Now I beg most respectfully to challenge all Normandy, to produce three couple of hounds (not stolen from my friend's pack), of equal dexterity, or a fox capable of carrying them over such a leap, in the same prompt and sportsmanlike style, and I trust that, until this challenge is ac-

cepted, we shall have no more insinuations that we hunt *un miserable renard de sac* for want of better game.*

Is shooting the object of your visit?.... You will find France well supplied with game and the shooting sufficiently *open* for all sporting purposes. No longer restricted by the unapproachable preserves, and rigorously defended manors of wealthy monopolists, you may ramble over this fertile country without hinderance or interruption, and you will, by selecting proper localities, which it is part of the object of this little volume to point out, find partridges, quails, woodcocks, snipes, and an endless variety of waterfowl, in the greatest abundance.

To have good partridge shooting, it is necessary to be on the ground at the commencement of the season, *à l'ouverture de la chasse*. A good walker, who is a fair average shot, may calculate upon having excellent sport; but, all sportsmen know that, when the cover disappears, and the birds grow wary, little can be expected from partridge shooting, either at home or abroad; whether we assail them, as colonel Hawker recommends,

* *Nouvelle vénerie normande*, par Edm^d LE MASSON; published at Avranches, 1844, page 262.—An excellent work.

on horseback ; or , as most shooting sportsmen prefer , on a *brisk pair of legs*.

Those gentlemen who come to France for partridge shooting should be provided with active and steady dogs , and be prepared to ramble over a wide range of country, as they must make up their minds to beat for, and tumble their birds in a sportsmanlike manner.

A good retriever is also essential to fetch birds out of the uncut crops , as the farmers have not yet agreed upon making any allowance for the over eagerness of young gentlemen who , most unhesitatingly , trample down wheat , beans , and all other crops, in searching for wounded birds.

The French laws too, which are, in this respect, sufficiently pinching and uncomfortable , are administered with such rigorous inflexibility , that neither explanation nor apology is ever received in mitigation of punishment for this trifling indiscretion :* I must , therefore , warn my readers that

* This does not proceed from any unwillingness , on the part of the French courts of justice, to take into their consideration , any favourable circumstances that may exist in the case ; on the contrary, it is the necessary consequence of an express provision of the law “ *that no extenuating circumstance shall be taken into consideration in administering these laws.*” A friend of mine who was partridge shooting in the vicinity of Saint-Omer,

they cannot, in France, stand upon anybody's *corn* with impunity, and I recommend them not to try the experiment.

As there is no rambling through the stubble fields of France without occasionally meeting the french *chasseurs*, of whom there are many grades, as we shall see in the sequel of this work, it may be useful to introduce some of them to your notice; more especially as it behoves you to be acquainted with some of their habits. They are both in dress and manners a very peculiar class.

The uniform is simple: they wear a dirty *blouse* over a still dirtier pair of trousers, both held together by a shot pouch, strapped round the waist, a large pair of gaiters most ingeniously

finding himself indisposed, quitted the party, and proceeded homewards; *en route*, he met with a field of beans, the crop was cut, but still remained on the land, tied up in detached parcels, ready for removal. He walked through the field, his gun on his shoulder and his dog at his heels. The circumstance was reported, and he was prosecuted, the facts were undisputed, it was not alleged that he could have injured the crop in the slightest degree, but it could not be denied that he passed over the ground, with his dog and gun, *before the crop was removed*, and he was fined 80 francs. The judge lamented that he was obliged to impose the fine, but the *procureur du roi*, considered it his duty to enforce it.

fastened on by a variety of cross-tyings (the buttons being absent and the button holes worn out);



and a *casquette* resembling an old hunting cap; the difficulty being to imagine one sufficiently old to justify the comparison. With respect to features, they really appear to have none: if they have any, they are not discernable being covered with thickly matted hair, or bristles, presenting much the appearance of a hedge hog when rolled up under a dog's nose, and peeping out to see that all is right.

Such are the marks and tokens of this unique and eccentric personage: You cannot mistake him, his habits and manners concern you much more than his singular appearance. He will, when your

dogs are on game , walk up with the utmost *sang froid* , and fire at the birds either on the ground or on the wing , without the smallest hesitation , and if you happen to fire at the same time, he will most certainly claim the bird , and insist that you fired in a totally different direction. You may consider this a very impertinent familiarity, feel most indignant , get into a towering passion , and consider that you owe it to society to kick him out of his *blouse* : but I must implore of you to summon up all your forbearance to stifle your indignation , and to try , however difficult the task , to laugh at his insolence.

In all such disputes the *chasseur roturier* will be found an over match for his antagonist , being quite indifferent as to mere questions of *right* or *wrong* : besides you must bear in mind that he is armed with a loaded gun , and has literally *no face* by which he can be identified if he shoots one of your party, a fearful advantage, and one which he perfectly understands.

Wherever shooting or fishing is prohibited, the circumstance is notified to the public by a board on which the words *chasse réservée* or *pêche réservée* appear in large and legible characters. These boards are posted up like those used in England to prevent turnip stealing and such like

flagitious crimes and misdemeanors. This *chasse réservée* answers all the purposes of those long and special denunciations, which we sometimes see exhibited in certain bogs and mountainous districts, which are said to be poisoned, for the preservation of game, and will occasionally be found to have venom enough in it. I must therefore recommend my brethren to pay it the most scrupulous respect, and, to encourage them in so doing, I can assure them that these attractive words by no means imply the presence of any extraordinary quantity of game within the forbidden precincts. The *braconniers*, who can do the trick without much dread of detection, or perhaps, with the connivance of the *garde chasse*, know where to pay their nocturnal visits, and with the fatal drag net, graphically named *le drap mortuaire*, catch entire covies at each haul, while the vain *propriétaire* enjoys the invidious and unprofitable distinction of possessing a *chasse réservée*, without a brace of birds upon his entire estate.

The *battue system*, now so universally condemned by the sporting world, has existed, from time immemorial, both in Europe and Asia; and however justifiable it may be when employed for the destruction of wild beasts and noxious animals in countries which are infested by them, there can

be no excuse for such proceedings in a royal forest or a private preserve ; or for introducing such barbarous brutalities into the field sports of a civilized country. In Tartary,—whole tribes of barbarians are occasionally engaged for several successive days, in forcing wild beasts and game of every description, into particular districts ; and, when thus flocked together, they fall upon them with savage yells, massacre and devour them.

The Germans appear disposed to rival the Tartars in these brutalities, for they have, recently, introduced music to give a more theatrical effect to the death struggles of the poor stag, and even prevailed upon ladies of pre-eminent distinction, to preside over the brutal orgies.

These amiable musicians will no doubt, now that the *polka* is becoming so unfashionable, favour us with something in the shape of a *stag hornpipe* to take its place.

The *battue* of Auxerre, in the department of Yonne, in France, is perhaps the most curious on record, and was annually held, from time immemorial, down to the revolution of 1789, when it was finally abolished.

Thousands of persons flocked into Auxerre, and many came from incredible distances to witness

or assist in this ludicrous fête. It was conducted in a novel and very peculiar manner. The beaters, amounting to several thousand persons, were only armed with sticks. They formed an immense circle, so as to prevent the escape of any animal that might be found within its circumference: then, advancing towards its centre, they started the game. The hares, once on foot, kept running to and fro in the gradually contracting space, until tumbled and rolled over by some well directed blow; whereupon there was an immediate rush to gain possession of the prize which, was awarded to any person who held it over his head, exclaiming: *à l'autre, à l'autre; celui-ci est bien levé!* But as the hare was no sooner seized by one, than it was snatched from him by another, it was no uncommon occurrence to see it torn to pieces in the scramble, before any body could perform the prescribed ceremony.

The last *battue royale* on record in France took place in the year 1830, when Charles X treated the king of Naples to one of these unsportsmanlike exhibitions in the noble forest of Compiègnes. The game consisted chiefly of deer and boars. Above 200 of them were massacred, in a few hours, without regard either to age or sex.

British sportsmen who visit France are some-

times tempted to purchase French guns : very respectable looking double barrels may be had at from 200 to 400 francs : but such purchases should not be hastily made , as low priced guns are seldom good ; and are frequently most dangerous implements. The barrels are oftentimes very inartificially united ; an imperfection which renders them useless , for , when this is the case , they throw the shot inwards , i. e. the right hand barrel throws the shot to the left , the left hand one to the right of the object.

Colonel Hawker , whose authority is conclusive on such matters , tells us , that each barrel should be set rather inwards , to counteract the effect of the recoil which makes them swerve outwards in firing : it is the excess of this allowance, or inclination inwards , that constitutes the very serious defect to which I allude, when it exists, the French say the barrels are *bridés*. Care should also be taken to select a substantial gun , as few light double barrels can be safely depended upon. Indeed the bursting of guns is , by no means , so uncommon in France as it is in England where it creates a great sensation , and is much spoken of. On the contrary , if a gun bursts in France, and the *chasseur* is seriously wounded , they merely say : *c'est malheureux !* but if he is killed , they say :

c'est fort malheureux!! and nobody (except perhaps those who may be at the expense of burying him) thinks any more of the matter. In short, if the British sportsman resolves upon having a French gun, he should purchase it from an eminent gunsmith, and not grudge to pay at least 500 francs for a plain mounted, well finished gun, taking particular care that no part of the price is given for mere useless embellishment.

With reference to the choice of gunpowder, which is a matter of vital importance to the shooting sportsman, it may not be amiss to say a few words in this place.

The materials of which gunpowder is made consist of saltpetre, sulphur and charcoal, and these ingredients must be pure, judiciously proportioned, and perfectly mixed to produce good powder: the main difficulty is to obtain pure saltpetre as free as possible from marine salt, which is the deteriorating material in the compound: it attracts atmospherical moisture which reduces the strength of the powder, and prevents its igniting simultaneously. To try the strength of gunpowder nothing can exceed the accuracy of the *éprouvette*, or powder-trier, with which every shooting sportsman should be provided, and which will save him from the mortification of seeing his birds struggling off,

severely wounded , instead of “ *dying in the air* , ” as they should , when within proper distances.

If , however , you have no *éprouvette* other tests must be depended upon. In the first place, always select unglazed powder of a dull slate colour : to try its strength , ignite a little upon white paper : if it be good , it will burn simultaneously, leaving only a grayish spot upon the paper : but, if it be of an inferior quality, it will leave blackish or yellowish spots , or burn the paper.

There are two sorts of powder in pretty general use for shooting purposes in France. The common powder at 4 francs , and the fine powder at 6 francs per pound.

Many sportsmen use the common powder , and say it is sufficiently strong , and that it does not dirty a gun so quickly as the fine powder.

At the commencement of the season , when birds are killed within short distances , it may answer the purpose, but , even then, I prefer, and , therefore , recommend the 6 franc powder , as it is always desirable to command the full range of your gun , and to be prepared to deal with circumstances as they arise,

Some sportsmen are eternally changing the size of their shot, and are most particular in employing

a different size for each sort of game. This has always appeared to me to be an exceedingly unnecessary speculation. Nobody should ever use larger shot than N° 5 for partridge or grouse, or smaller than N° 8 for snipe and mixed shooting. There are numerous advantages in using small shot : the number of the grains is increased ; they fall thicker on the birds, and, as they lie more compactly in the barrel, they are propelled with greater regularity and force.

A gentleman, whose pronunciation was not quite parisian, was thrown into great confusion at not being able to find any snipe shot in the city of Nantes : he went from shop to shop, asking for *plumes de bécassines*, instead of *plomb de bécassines* : the shopkeepers, of course, had none.

Colonel Hawker, who is the inventor of the copper caps now in such general use, tells us that :
“ The innumerable accidents which have occurred
“ with them were occasioned by three causes :
“ 1st, bad workmanship, in not bringing the
“ blow of the striker to act equally on all parts
“ of the nipple. 2^{ndly}, want of proper fence to
“ protect the eye ; and, 3^{dly}, a want of sufficient strength in the first lifting of the main
“ spring.” And he further adds, “ that caps

“ of inferior quality have caused numerous accidents. ” *

The low priced French caps which are imported into England , and sold in London at an immense profit , are most dangerous articles. Sportsmen , who value their eyes , should have nothing to do with them ; but very fair caps may be purchased in France at from five to six francs per thousand. The best are those manufactured by *Gevelet*. I should, however , recommend sportsmen to provide themselves with copper caps before they leave England, as there is often much difficulty in procuring them to fit the nipples with sufficient exactness , which is a matter of considerable importance.

M^r Péron, 51, rue des Cuisiniers, S'-Omer, (gunsmith), is always well supplied with gunpowder, shot , copper caps, powder flasks and shot pouches which he sells on very reasonable terms—and any gentleman who wishes to have his portrait taken , will find him a very trustworthy and excellent artist, though he is sometimes *cruelly exact* in his resemblances. He had a funny competitor , in this branch of his business, in a gentleman who inserted the following ludicrous advertisement in a

* *Instructions to young sportsmen* , by Col P. HAWKER , 6 edition , p. 73.

provincial newspaper to attract the notice of the English residents :

“ Any lady wishing to be taken off has one
 “ opportunity , and will find it very good to try
 “ M^r Chatterrini who is descended on the *Petite-
 “ Sainte-Catherine*.

“ M^r Chatterrini can show testimonials , of his
 “ great parts and performance, from distinguished
 “ Ladies to whom he has given much pleasure. ”

If fishing be the object of your visit , you will find this fertile country in every direction intersected by rivers , many of which are abundantly supplied with trout of respectable size* and quality, and conduct the angler through the most romantic scenery.

If you are a sketcher , a botanist or an entomo-

* Châteaubriand in his *Voyages en Amérique*, 4 vol. p. 455, tells us “ that the trout , in lake Huron , exceed 200 pounds weight.” You will scarcely catch any quite so large in France , but you may get some of six pounds weight , and will be very lucky if you do. M^r Powel , an eminent angler residing at St-Omer , was kind enough to show me a trout taken on the 8th Feby 1847, at M^r Dambricourt’s mill , within half an hour’s walk of the town, which measured 2 feet 4 inch in length and 7 1/2 inches in width (at the dorsal fin) it weighed a little more than seven pounds, though not in firm condition, or of a brilliant colour.

logist , you will find many objects worthy of scientific notice , and upon which you **may** advantageously employ whatever skill you possess.

This beautiful country is little known to those tourists who rumble on to Paris in an unwieldy diligence , and content themselves with a mere transitory glance at the rich crops and highly cultivated fields through which they pass ; and, who, turning with disgust from those stiff rows of pruned up and mop-headed elm trees which rather disfigure , than ornament the public roads , hastily decide that there is nothing worth seeing in the rural districts of France. They are sadly mistaken. The delicious and picturesque scenery of her beautiful valleys : the foaming cascades and rushing torrents of her mountain streams , with their winding, wooded, and verdant banks , are all reserved for the admiration and enjoyment of the enthusiastic angler who , so well , knows how to appreciate them.

After fishing down the Canche and the Aa , and passing a few days upon the Meuse and descending that noble river , in some of the comfortable steamers that navigate its waters , the angler may form an adequate notion of the richness and beauty of French scenery , and will have no reason to regret his excursion.

It must be gratifying to the British angler to know that, while wandering along these lovely banks, and casting his gaudy flies upon their rippling streams, he is surrounded by a kind and friendly people; and that, when overtaken by a thunder storm which, in these localities, bursts forth almost instantaneously, and is accompanied by the heaviest and most overwhelming torrent of rain that can well be imagined, he may seek shelter in their humble dwellings, where he will be received with a degree of courteous politeness which would reflect no discredit upon a much higher grade. They will crowd about him like old and familiar acquaintances, admire his delicate tackle, gaze upon his dazzling flies, communicate all the local information they possess with a frankness that doubles its intrinsic value: and upon his departure wish him the most brilliant success, in their own beautifully concise phraseology: *à la bonne pêche*.

Their kind and complimentary good wishes are unfortunately, on these occasions, seldom of any avail, for the river becomes disturbed, thickened, and discoloured, to such an extent, that a trout could scarcely see the angler himself (not to speak of a black gnat or a tiny red palmer), in the water: indeed the most pertinacious fisherman will, at a

single glance discover that his " occupation is " gone " and that nothing remains but to get home with all possible expedition , pay for his *carriole* , and console himself with a prime bottle of S'-Emilion , or anything else he likes better ; *pauvre homme !*

We cannot contemplate the disinterested kindness, and extreme simplicity of the French peasantry, without feeling a very warm interest in their welfare. They have oftentimes reminded me of that living exemplification of universal philanthropy " the Irish peasant " who would cheerfully divide his last meal with the unknown visitor of his rustic habitation. When we reflect how little he possesses , the small sum total of all his earthly hopes and wishes , and the contentment with which he endures such numerous privations , we cannot but behold him with wonder and admiration , and feelingly deplore that he should ever be made restless , turbulent and factious , by the grasping avarice of an embarrassed landlord , or the reckless ambition of designing politicians who are ready to traffic in his peace , or in his blood , under the pretext of some spurious sentiment which he is too artless and too honest to detect. *Mais revenons à nos moutons.*

The French peasantry are a moral and religious

people and exceedingly industrious. Their cabins are built of a framework of timber which is filled up with clay and chopped staw well tempered together : they are thatched like the better description of Irish cabins : they are often neatly plastered and whitened on the outside and form a pleasing feature in the surrounding landscape. They are generally collected in villages , and seldom built along the high roads , and have comfortable and well cropped gardens attached to them. In these gardens you will see abundance of very luxuriant looking leeks , onions, turnips, carrots , cabbages , peas , beans and pot herbs , of which they make much use , as their common food consists of brown bread and vegetable soup , with , perhaps , a morsel of butter or lard thrown in , to render it more palatable , but they seldom eat animal food.

In some villages they have an excellent system of baking their bread. For this purpose they keep a public oven for the use of their little community , and sustain it at their common expense. Each family sends its supply of bread , together with fuel in proportion to its amount , to the public bakery , where some judiciously selected villager , of sufficient skill and integrity , fills the honorary office of baker general , without fee or emolument ; but who , in all probability , gets

comfortably married , and well settled in life , on the strength of his reputation for turning out a well baked loaf , and does not , we may conjecture , forget the *kissing crust* when his *bonne amie* comes for her share.

I was once accidentally driven into one of these village bakeries , just at the critical moment to see the large round loaves, piping hot, heaped up like miniature mill stones , on the clean brick floor , yielding a most inciting and agreeable scent.

The good people perceived that I was overhauling their stock in trade , and very politely offered me some : but , as I had a sufficient luncheon in my *panier* , and no inclination to diminish their frugal supply, I contented myself with a mere taste which I considered , and pronounced , excellent. A good humoured , buxom , red headed lass , whose large round face rivalled , in its benign circumference , the huge loaf she held before her , by way of politely sustaining my judgment , pronounced her ready acquiescence, in that curious and idiomatic phrase *pas mauvais* , accompanied with a graceful and significant gesture which extinguished all doubt as to her true meaning , and complimentary intentions.

The costume of the peasantry is , in some parts of France , worthy of notice. In Britany , for

instance , the women wear a dark coloured *corsage*, and petticoats extending to their ankles , scarlet aprons , and remarkably high muslin caps not infrequently trimmed with expensive lace, and present an interesting and strikingly picturesque appearance. The men wear jackets , trousers and a black cravat : they somewhat resemble our discharged seamen before they get rid of the *ready*. They are all comfortable and industrious in their habits. Their chestnut and walnut trees produce abundant crops , and the manner in which they collect the fruit is curious. All the boys and girls in the neighbourhood are assembled for the purpose : they clamber up the trees , beat down the fruit , take half for their trouble , and leave the other moiety for the *propriétaire*.

Whatever may be the condition of the French and British peasantry, or the amount of the wants or privations they may, and must sometimes endure, they cannot turn to the poor degraded Russians without exulting in the freedom they enjoy , and in their great moral superiority.

The Russian peasant belongs to the proprietor of his native soil : he cannot leave the estate without permission , and he can only purchase that permission by the payment of an exorbitant tax. This is not a bad sample of an *absentee tax*

than which nothing can be more odious , arbitrary or despotic.

Let us see the effect of this tyranny upon the Russian serf , for he is no more , and he cannot be much less.

Le marquis de Custine informs us that the Russian serf is totally destitute of all moral sentiment, and that he has no feeling of parental or conjugal affection. He gives the following curious instance of his extraordinary apathy on the tenderest of all sore points amongst civilized people.

A clever mechanic , who was exercising his trade at St'-Petersburg , got permission to visit his family in his native village. On his return , his employer asked him whether he was content with the condition in which he found his family , after so long an absence ? He replied : Quite content ; *my wife presented me with two children which she had during my absence , and I was delighted with them.* *

Surely , the day cannot be far distant when Russia will burst through chains screwed so tightly upon her increasing population, and relieve Europe from a spectacle of such disgraceful barbarity.

* *Russia , in 1859 , par M^r LE MARQUIS DE CUSTINE.*
Vol. 3 , p. 408.

How widely different are the feelings and sentiments of the lower orders , in France , from those of the apathetic mechanic in the Marquis de Custine's narration.

The following little memoir will serve to illustrate the native warmth , and impetuosity of the French character when excited by such stirring considerations.

A gentleman of large fortune , who recently died in the town of S^t-Omer , left a handsome legacy to his faithful housekeeper , which soon rendered her , though on the wrong side of 40 , an object of considerable attraction. She accordingly drew her long train of admirers through the endless labyrinth of that complicated and bewitching passion, being too kind to refuse, and too timid to accept of their addresses. It will be sufficient for me to mention two of her ardent lovers : one was a gay *commis voyageur*, of no mean personal appearance, whose jet black and curling whiskers, and soft *moustache*, indicated a warm and vigorous constitution, and whose unceasing exertions, in the recommendation of the cheapest and best steel pens manufactured in France , had given him the most gracious and persuasive address : in short, he was irresistibly insinuating and not quite six and twenty.

The other was a most respectable tradesman in comfortable circumstances ; had been a good husband and was an affectionate father. I need go no farther : She accepted the *commis voyageur*. The day was fixed for the consummation of their happiness. In the mean time , the betrothed *commis voyageur* was compelled , whether by the want of steel pens in London , or the superabundant supply of them in France , I have not learned ; but he was compelled to visit London for an entire fortnight. They parted as lovers , as betrothed , and affectionate lovers have always , and , it is to be hoped , ever shall part on such trying occasions. Of course it was strictly enjoined that he should write to her from Calais , and from Dover , and from Canterbury , and from London ; and in short , that he should be continually writing to her while he remained in England.

Before the fortnight expired , a particular letter arrived from Manchester , (one , I presume , of an unpublished series , on their mutual affection) , which she tore open in the usual haste , read with the usual avidity , and flung on the table with the usual indignation , under such heart rending circumstances ; not that it really was designed to occasion such agitation , or that it contained anything that we should consider at all alarming as it

merely announced , that his employers had ordered him to visit Manchester ; and that he could not reach France for six days after the day fixed upon for their marriage.

I shall not transcribe the rest of that fatal letter ; it would be unjust to do so , because she read no farther , and , from her nice perception of the infidelity and unworthiness it so clearly betrayed , it could not be reasonably expected that she would read any more of his detested writing. She , therefore , without any unnecessary delay , put on her bonnet and pattens , took her cloak and umbrella , and proceeded at once to the abode of the comfortable tradesman , and straightway tendered unto him her heart and hand , which he gladly accepted. All the preparations for the wedding were made ,



and she was accordingly married at the time and place originally intended.

Nothing was changed , but the husband. But there was a secret flame which could not be extinguished : she had feverish dreams at night , and maddening reflections by day ; she discovered the infidelity was her own ; she

pined away for six months in the excruciating torture of bitter remorse, and then terminated her own insupportable existence.

The French are not however under all circumstances as inflexible in their attachments as the poor housekeeper. Two young fishermen who had lived together in perfect harmony for several years, and resolved never to separate, at length determined on marrying; and the better to promote their wishes, and to provide as far as possible against any disagreement between their wives, paid their addresses to two sisters of their own grade. The day was fixed for both marriages, They agreed to contribute equally towards the expense of the customary marriage feast, and that their respective friends and relatives should be invited, to witness the ceremony and partake of the sumptuous repast. I should mention that in France it is requisite to register an intended marriage some days previously to its solemnization and that it is the mayor who performs the legal ceremony, the second marriage *à l'église* being merely a sort of compromise with the church, adds nothing to the validity of the contract. When the day arrived the bridegrooms and their happy brides proceeded to the *hôtel-de-ville*, escorted by a long train of friends and relatives. Upon their

arrival the above mentioned registry was formally read, when to the utter amazement and confusion of all parties, it was discovered that in registering the marriages, the ladies were inadvertently given to the wrong husbands—a fatal mistake—which could not be rectified without a new registration and a consequent lapse of ten days more. The mayor was (like all French functionaries) inexorable—what was to be done? The company was assembled—the dinner was prepared—the poor fishermen had expended their last franc in providing every delicacy within their reach. There was no other means of solving the difficulty so they proposed to exchange brides—they were sisters, both young, amiable, and industrious, and after a short discussion it was decided to the infinite satisfaction of their numerous and merry guests, that the marriages should be solemnized according to the registry, which was immediately carried into effect.

This reminds one, of dean Swift's decision when consulted by a peasant about the choice of a wife, the peasant had two sweet-hearts, the one had a cow, the other had none, and he preferred the latter, but the dean recommended him to take the former, assuring him, that there was not a cow difference, between any two women.

It may be reasonably presumed that all tourists, who visit the continent, are provided with Murray's excellent guide-books, from which they may obtain all requisite information on the subject of cathedrals, gothic buildings, public libraries, museums, picture galleries, and lists of the good, bad, and indifferent hotels.

My hints, useful or otherwise, must therefore travel in a different direction, and must contract themselves within the very narrow compass of the few pages I can devote to such matters.

In perambulating the rural districts of France, you will meet the *berger*, or French shepherd, his dogs and flock. You may see him basking in the sun, perhaps asleep, while his sagacious dogs are guarding his flock in the midst of *unfenced crops*: they divide the prescribed boundaries between them, and keep running backwards and forwards, quickly or slowly according to the exigencies of the case: a look, from one of these dogs, is quite sufficient to warn off any sheep disposed to approach too near the forbidden fruit. How they are trained, or brought, to such wonderful perfection, I cannot conjecture: it appears to me to be perfectly miraculous, and is worth your consideration.

You may never have heard of the *troupeaux de*

la Mesta , which , in the sixteenth century , employed 60,000 *bergers*. The sheep then amounted to seven millions. At present they exceed five millions : they are divided into flocks of 2000 each , with a *Mayoral* , fifty *bergers* , and fifty dogs to conduct them. They traverse the vast tracks of uncultivated land in the arid plains of Estremadura , and in their destructive progress , sweep away every thing in the shape of vegetation.

These spanish *bergers* enjoy numerous privileges,* some of which are extremely prejudicial to the peasantry of the country , who dread their approach as much as the arrival of the devouring flights of grasshoppers which , sometimes, eat up the most luxuriant crops in a few minutes.

I was once catching grasshoppers for bait , to fish for the enormous roach carp occasionally taken in the *fossés* round the ramparts of S'-Omer , and was accosted by a French gentleman who wished to know what I wanted with them : being a very candid person , I informed him that they were , if used in sufficient quantity, a great addition to pea-soup. He said he would certainly try them. I afterwards met him , and he said that they had no particular flavour that he could discover ; but

* *Histoire d'Espagne et de Portugal* , par M. EM. LEFRANC.

required *beaucoup de poivre*. I recommended him to have the next batch broiled, and to try *cayenne* with them. *Oui, oui, oui ; je l'essaierai, bonjour, Monsieur.*

The markets are worth your notice. The vegetable markets, which are generally spread over the *grand'place* or some equally spacious locality, present a very animated and picturesque scene. They are formed by the wives and daughters of the peasants and small farmers who, each, have their neatly made up bunches of most tempting looking vegetables before them. The turnips, carrots and roots of all sorts, are so well washed, and so fresh and clean, that they exhibit their vivid colours in a most strikingly beautiful manner. A painter might, in these markets, pick up some curious clusters of vegetables accidentally thrown together and most harmoniously contrasted with each other. The women are not particularly handsome, but they are remarkably neat and smart looking in their simple dresses and snow white caps.

If you take a peep into the fish and fowl markets, you may see abundance of game, and fresh water fish, of all sorts in season, selling at reasonable prices.

Before you quit these scenes you will be attracted by that most singularly grotesque character,

the *charlatan* who plays his fiddle , sings his ballads and goes through a sort of theatrical performance for the gratification of the most irredeemably rakish looking circle of admirers you ever beheld : you may make one of them , if it suits your fancy ; and you will find his costume , gestures , and grimaces, ludicrous in the extreme. He is generally mounted upon a chair , and often has his wife , or *chère amie* , (*que vous importe*) ? upon another , aiding and assisting , as she is in duty bound , in all his humorous vagaries , and accompanying him on her tambarine generally to the tune of no tune at all.

Les guinguettes or tea-gardens are also worth a visit. There you will see the respectable middle classes , and many of their inferiors , waltzing and dancing quadrilles together with the strictest propriety and good manners. You will find no loose straggling , half intoxicated rake , interrupting the amusement of the evening , merely because it is not exactly suited to his own taste or distempered imagination.

You may dance , if you know how , and have any fancy for so doing : no disengaged female will refuse to dance with you provided you can just get your tongue about french enough to prevent your being mistaken for an eskimaux, which is desirable.

Les guinguettes afford much gratifying evidence of the superiority and refinement of the lower classes in France.

In England good manners don't descend so low.

If you are a lover of music you will have frequent opportunities of hearing exquisite military bands, and of attending concerts where many eminent amateur, and professional musicians laudably contribute their aid to create a fund for the relief of the poor.

The theatres in provincial towns are scarcely worth your notice ; but if you admire equestrian skill, and chance to fall in with M^r Franconi's troop, I recommend you to pay a visit to his *cirque équestre*.

Those who come to reside on the continent for the education of children , or who are likely to remain for any considerable period , will find it advantageous to take a house and to furnish it for themselves , and should not buy expensive furniture, as they cannot calculate on selling it again as advantageously as less costly ware, which may answer quite as well.

I must also most strongly recommend my readers , whenever they take either a house or lodgings, to have the agreement approved of by an *avocat* : his fee is only 5 francs , and it will prevent their

being involved in disputes from which it is not easy to get extricated ; unwritten promises are not binding , and are seldom faithfully recollected.

Those who come to France for the education of children cannot select a more suitable place than St-Omer. If they wish to go into society , and procure proper introductions , they will find the leading society of St-Omer of a very superior character, and the French gentry a liberal, high minded , and most estimable people. The gay season there , commences with the new year , and continues until lent , during which period there is a succession of brilliant balls , assemblies , dinner parties , and soirées, and much social intercourse. And many of the English residents give very agreeable parties.

Many fastidious persons , on their first arrival in France , condemn the unreserved manners of the French , in certain matters which our peculiar notions of delicacy induce us to conceal with the most scrupulous care, as if all the world was bound to conform to the British standard, and that it was the model of perfection.

Now , that is certainly too high ground for John Bull , esquire , to maintain ; even if he was three times as big as he really is, that sort of extravagant self sufficiency is only fit for an American President,

who quietly lays his finger on the Oregon territory, and talks as if he could slip it like a mince pie into his capacious trousers-pocket, and run away, and eat it, before any body could overtake him.

You should mix with your estimable neighbours, on the continent, with a fixed determination never to find fault with national habits and customs which were adopted, and approved of, long before you were born; and which will survive you whether you approve of them or not, and doing so, you will find much to admire, and very little to find fault with, in persons of your own grade in France.

Numerous anecdotes are related, in illustration of the unreserved manners of our Neighbours on the continent, but the following, will be sufficient to prepare the tourist, for what he is likely to encounter in the course of his rambles.

I once travelled from Lille to Dunkerque in company with a French gentleman and his wife, and found them very agreeable companions.

When we reached Cassel, the diligence drew up at a hotel in a position which enabled the company to see, through a *porte cochère*, into a court yard in the corner of which stood a small, and oftentimes very convenient building, which I shall not otherwise name. Monsieur called to the *conduc-*

teur to open the door of the *coupé*. The door was instantly opened. The gentleman no sooner got out, than he took possession of that identical small building in the remote angle of the little court yard : but he was scarcely there when the lady owing perhaps to some sympathetic affection, (which it is not my business to investigate), descended from the diligence with great rapidity,



and, addressing her husband in great haste, called out in a very audible voice : *Dépêchez-vous , mon ami , je suis bien pressée... j'ai beaucoup à faire... la diligence va partir... dépêchez-vous donc... vite , vite , vite.—Eh bien , répondit le mari , je garderai un morceau pour l'ancienne ville de Dun-kerque.* And, to do the gentleman justice, he very promptly attended to her call and though some old fashioned people might say, he should have finished

his *toilette* before he made his appearance , better informed and more polished persons will applaud his consideration and politeness... You will be glad to hear that the fair lady was in time for the diligence , and not , a little proud of her despatch.

PART FIRST.



ON HUNTING.





CHAPTER I.

The *limier* and the *valet de limier*, a well educated pair—How they proceed to business—Negro hunting in the Island of Cuba.

It is necessary to say a few words about the *limier*, before we enter upon the subject of stag hunting. We must find a stag before we can hunt him, and that important duty is confided to the *valet de limier* and his intelligent dog.

In ancient times the *limier* discharged many of those duties now intrusted to our efficient police, and afforded considerable assistance in detecting the retreat of malefactors, and in bringing them to justice.

The Spaniards have not as yet dispensed with their aid in such matters, and still employ them, in the Island of Cuba, in negro hunting. When placed on the track of a negro, they never quit it until they overtake the unhappy fugitive, who, at once, surrenders himself to his barbarous pursuers, well knowing that escape is impossible and that, if he attempt it, he will be torn to pieces.

The *limier* should be judiciously selected: a dark coloured, quick sighted, well nosed and strong built dog, is essential for the faithful discharge of his laborious duties. He is far from being easily trained: on the contrary, it requires, at least, three years severe schooling to finish his education, in the course of which, great management is necessary, for he is very apt to sulk, and, if he do, there is much danger of his becoming perfectly intractable, and utterly useless.

It is a curious fact that the *limier* is sometimes found to have so strong a natural antipathy to the boar, that he cannot be prevailed upon to hunt him. In these instances, the moment he picks up

the scent of the boar , he runs behind his *valet* like a spaniel after having trodden on a snake , and becomes quite powerless.

When the *valet de limier* goes in search of a stag , he takes his *limier* on the leash , and never allows him to run at large , even for an instant ; his business being to trace out , and not to chase the animal,* they proceed together , much in the same affectionate manner as the blind beggar-man and his dog, mutually pulling at, and dragging each other, until the *limier* conducts him to the fatal thicket where the noble stag is lying in his lair.

The *valet de limier* requires (as will be seen hereafter) , much scientific knowledge and considerable ability to execute this , apparently very simple task , with any chance of success , for he must ascertain both the age and sex of the animal without getting a single glimpse at him.

To enable him to perform this arduous duty , he receives a suitable education. The *valets de limier* are carefully educated in Germany , where there are numerous public establishments for the purpose , and where they are instructed with becoming solicitude in every branch of their

* See the *valet de limier* and his *limier* on the leash , at the commencement of this chapter.

difficult profession. It is perfectly wonderful what expertness they sometimes acquire. There are volumes upon volumes written for their guidance in which (as in many other scientific works) , the rules are so frittered away by their never ending and complicated exceptions , that the more one studies them , the more difficult they appear.



CHAPTER II.

Stag hunting conducted with great pomp in France—The preparatory arrangements for a stag hunt—Curious modes of ascertaining the age of a stag, without seeing him—Relays of hounds—The piqueurs, their duty—A royal hunt—Modern mode of terminating it—Singular stag hunt in 1833—Where red deer are now found in France—La croix du cerf—Its wonderful virtues—Curious mode of computing distances.

Stag hunting, which has for ages been the favourite recreation of the kings of France is everywhere held in high estimation and is, from time

to time , conducted with much pomp and magnificence in the royal forests of Fontainebleau , * Compiègne ** and Chantilly.***

* The noble forest of Fontainebleau abounds with stags and deer , etc. and has been long celebrated for its hunting. It is situated in the department of the Seine and Marne , upon the high road from Paris to Lyons. The palace is one of the most magnificent in France. It was there, Napoléon held Pope Pius VII prisoner , and it was in it, that he abdicated his throne in 1814. His majesty Louis-Philippe has expended enormous sums in decorating and improving the palace.

There are some fine pieces of water in the beautiful gardens of Fontainebleau which abound with carp of extraordinary size. And the *Treille du roi* a magnificent vine, covering 5000 feet , and bearing abundance of superior grapes is deserving of particular notice. The forest contains 53,000 acres , and the population of the town exceeds 9,000.

** The extensive forest of Compiègne contains 50,000 acres, and is intersected by numerous roads and green alleys well arranged for hunting. It also contains abundance of stags and deer, etc. It is situated near the confluence of the Oise and the Aisne on the Flanders road. The palace was considerably improved by Napoléon who erected its celebrated gallery (100 feet in length , 40 in breadth and 30 in height), which is so justly admired. It was at the siege of Compiègne that the Maid of Orléans was made prisoner, in 1430.

*** The forest of Chantilly contains 7,000 acres , in the midst

The preparatory arrangements for a stag hunt are both curious and interesting.

The hind is never hunted, and the stag is not considered sufficiently strong for the chase, until he attains his sixth year. It, therefore, becomes essential to proceed with considerable caution in order to procure a suitable animal, without disturbing the hind or those deemed too young for the sport.

This critical duty devolves upon the *valets de limier*, who accordingly proceed to the forest accompanied by their well trained *limiers*, and soon discover the fresh tracks of the deer. An experienced *valet* is competent to decide on the age and sex of the animal, from an inspection of its tracks, not by any plain, infallible mark, which at once and definitively settles the question, but by the due consideration of various nice distinctions by which he is guided in his scientific and minute investigation.

of which is, a circular area called *la table ronde* from whence 12 roads branch off in different directions, the *rendez-vous* of hunting parties in the olden times, when St-Hubert's day was so well kept at Chantilly by the illustrious house of Condé. Chantilly now belongs to the Duke d'Aumale, fourth son of his majesty Louis-Philippe to whom it descended in 1850. It is well supplied with game.

In case the season is too dry , and the soil not in a condition to receive or retain a faithful impression of the stag's foot , the intelligent *valet* is not thereby deprived of all means of executing his delicate task , but is in such cases driven to decide upon more difficult , and less satisfactory , grounds. He is obliged to search for the *fumée* , or dung, of the animal , (which French writers say is of three sorts , *formée* , *en troche* , or *en plateaux*), by which he can also determine its age and sex.

The *fumée* is no sooner found than it is eagerly snatched up , examined , dissected , handed from one to another, and even tasted without the smallest repugnance.

The *valets de limier* consult , disagree , grow warm in the dispute, and often eat an entire *fumée en plateaux* , before they can dispose of the question at issue.

Having thus found the trail of a suitable stag , they proceed with extreme caution to trace him out , following up the scent with the *limier* on the leash , until they arrive at some thicket , or some dense part of the forest , where they conceive the animal is lying in his lair. They cannot approach sufficiently near to see him, lest he might be alarmed and take flight: so they go round the suspected

spot , carefully examining every opening through which he might have escaped , and trying them well with the *limier*.

If they cannot discover any trail leading out of the thicket , they conclude that he still remains within the circle they have so described , and that their task is faithfully executed.

Having thus performed their duty , they render a full and circumstantial account of everything they have done and seen ; and frequently , at the same time , deliver a portion of the *fumée en plateaux* to their superior officer , that he may , after the fullest , consideration , determine what degree of reliance can be placed on their report , and on the conclusion at which they have arrived. The superior officer to whom their report is so submitted , being a person who is himself raised from the rank of *valet de limier* , and promoted for his superior skill and intelligence , is thoroughly well versed in all the intricacies of his profession , and fully competent to solve any difficulty that may arise , so that there is little danger of any disappointment when he decides in favour of the report , and adopts their views.

The *valets de limier* then return to the forest , accompanied by the huntsman and his attendants to keep watch on the devoted stag. The huntsman

selects proper positions for his relays, and disposes of them accordingly.

These relays consist of separate packs of hounds which are posted at different points, so as to be prepared for the chase, in whatever direction the stag may take when roused from his lair.

The *piqueurs* are also at their posts, and remain mounted with their respective packs. The office of *piqueur* is one of considerable importance. It



is their special business to watch the movements of the stag, and, by all the means in their power to defeat any *ruse* he may attempt to play off in the course of the chase. They examine his track, and endeavour to discover something peculiar in its form, by which it may be distinguished from the tracks of other deer; such peculiarities arise from

a thousand little accidents , and are of vast importance to the *piqueur* when he can discover them. He is always well mounted , and well acquainted with the forest and country around him , and with the habits of the animal he hunts, and seldom fails to extricate his pack from any difficulty in which it may be involved.

Such are the formal and preliminary arrangements that precede a royal stag hunt. When they are all completed , the august company assembles in all its courtly splendour. The ladies , mounted on their gentle steeds ; or seated in their light and elegant carriages , shed an additional lustre on the animating scene , while an intense anxiety pervades and agitates the gay assemblage.

When all is ready , the huntsman rouses the noble stag, and away he dashes at rail road speed. The shrill signal to uncouple the hounds is immediately given , re-echoed by numerous trumpets and horns, and instantly obeyed.

The impatient hounds are no sooner uncoupled and laid on the fresh track , than they dash off in full cry, and all unite in the joyous chase.

“ Unharbour'd now the royal stag forsakes
“ His wonted lair; he shakes his dappled sides
“ And tosses high his beamy head, the copse,

“ Beneath his antlers, bends. What doubling shifts.
“ He tries ! not more the wily hare , in these
“ Would still persist, did not the full-mouth'd pack
“ With dreadful concert thunder in his rear.
“ The woods reply, the hunter's cheering shouts
“ Float thro' the glades, and the wide forest rings,
“ Now merrily they chant ! Their nostrils deep
“ Inhale the grateful steam. Such is the cry.

On the other hand , when hard pressed , the stag endeavours, by various stratagems , to elude his enemies : he sometimes runs into the lair of another stag and thus tries to turn the dogs upon fresh game : again he dashes into the midst of a herd of deer, and forces one of them to single out from the rest , that he may become the object of pursuit , or bounds over drains, roads, and hedges, to break off the scent and to baffle the hounds. But the active and intelligent *piqueurs* keep an unceasing watch on all his movements, and counteract all his contrivances.

If he reach the brink of a river , he plunges into the most rapid part of the current, and swims down the stream for a considerable distance, before he crosses it , or takes refuge in some wooded island where he can conceal himself.

When the stag takes the soil, it is often the signal that the final conflict is approaching : he is

then soon at bay, ready to sell his life at its highest purchase , and to give battle when he can no longer fly for protection.

. “ resolved to die,
 “ He fears no more, but rushes on his foes
 “ And deals his deaths around, beneath his feet,
 “ These grov’ling lie, those by his antlers gor’d
 “ Defile th’ensanguin’d plain.

This was formerly a serious fight , and was usually terminated by some daring hunter who , courageously, closed in upon his well armed foe , and cut him down with his *couteau de chasse*. *Le vieux cerf* , in these conflicts , has frequently strew’d his grave with both dogs and men.*

But a less dangerous and , it must be admitted , a more refined method , has been adopted in modern times , to terminate the unequal contest : the noble animal is now treated to a *coup de fusil* , and thus drops before his merciless pursuers.

Such is the termination of a royal stag hunt.

As soon as the chase is over , the stag is skinned and cut up. The haunches , and such parts as

* As is attested by a monument raised to the memory of the Duc de Melun who , in 1725 , was killed near Chantilly by a stag he hunted and , attempted to cut down.

may be required for the table , find their way to the royal kitchen : the remainder is carefully rolled up in the skin , and placed as if the animal were lying in his lair. The *piqueur* sounds the *view* , and the dogs are encouraged to make a hearty meal on their well earned prize.

The horns , the noble antlers of the *vieux cerf* , form a splendid trophy for the king's sporting cabinet , or may be disposed of by his majesty's huntsman when it is , I presume, understood that the hounds eat them.

Those who hunt this noble animal with less pomp and ceremony, usually proceed to search for him in his ordinary haunts , either with the limier on the leash , or with a few steady old dogs under the most perfect command. When a suitable stag is found , these sagacious animals are drawn off , and the pack , kept in reserve , laid on the scent , when the business of the day commences. If such precautions were not taken , much mischief might be done in the forest , by disturbing the hind and the young deer. The Normans, it is said, are sometimes too impatient to adopt this cautious and judicious course , and occasionally search for the stag, with the pack intended for the chase ; a practice which is justly condemned by the highest authorities on the subject.

Monsieur Le Masson, in his *Nouvelle Vénérerie normande*, which is an excellent work, and will be found a desirable addition to any gentleman's sporting library, gives an account of a singular stag hunt which took place in the department of Seine and Oise, in the month of nov^r 1835 : the stag was found in the wood of Rochefort by the hounds of Monsieur le Baron de Schikler, a sportsman of great celebrity in that department.

The relays were stationed in the direction of Rambouillet and Dourdan : *le cerf dix cors* took the direction of Arpagon, entered the wood of Biscorne, traversed the forest of Marcoussy, the woods of Charmeaux and Carmes, the valley of Chevreuse, near d'Orsay, entered the wood of Pilleux, gained the forest of Verrières, took the water at Meudon, gave battle near the park and got into a washerwoman's court yard, above Sèvres, after a run of four hours and a half. Monsieur le Masson states that, it would be necessary to have witnessed that extraordinary chase to form a correct notion of its wonderful swiftness, and of the difficulties the Baron de Schikler's superior hounds had to encounter on that memorable occasion.

The relays were thrown out of play and the whole was accomplished by 32 hounds without

further assistance. They passed thro' thick forests, *marais* and wet lands, with such rapidity that the very best horses could scarcely keep pace with them, and, in the forest of Meudon where they had to deal with several fresh deer-tracks, held on to the hunted stag, with such ability and decision, that they never lost a moment in the whole run.*

Red deer are now rather scarce in France, but are still found in numerous extensive forests belonging to the state, many of which are rented by distinguished sportsmen who, thus, secure the enjoyment of their favourite amusement.

Amongst those forests, we may enumerate the forests of S'-Sever and Cerisy in the department of Calvados, the former in the vicinity of Vire and the latter near S'-Lo. They are both very extensive forests, and are rented by sportsmen for hunting purposes. The forest of Andaine or Domfront and the forest of Alençon, in the department of Orne, both of very considerable extent, and, in like manner, rented by sportsmen.

The forest of Lyons, in the department of Eure, which is also rented by sportsmen.

* For a full account of this extraordinary run, and another of equal interest see *Nouvelle Venerie normande*, p. 182.

The forests of Maulévriez , Brothonne , Verte , Roumare , Lalonde and Rouvray , in the department of Seine inférieure , none of which are , I believe , at present rented by sportsmen.

There are also red deer in the Ardennes , and in numerous forests throughout France.

Red deer were very abundant in Germany ; but suffered much during the late war , as the brave troops of the empire were rather addicted to deer shooting. We are told that the French soldiers, when in possession of Vienna , killed all the deer in the magnificent park *le Prater* , adjoining that city : even the common soldiers killed them in dozens ! *

The stag is known by different names , according to his age. Until he attains six months , he is called *faon* or fawn : he then loses his spotted appearance, acquires an uniform colour and the name of *hère* (which signifies a sorry fellow , a poor wretch).

From one to two years old , he gets those horns called *les dagues* from their resemblance to daggers , and hence takes the name of *daguet* or *pricket* ; at three years old , he is called *seconde tête* ; at four years old , *quatrième tête* ; at six years

* *Vienne*, par JEAN PEZZI ; p. 505.

old, *dix cors jeunement*; at seven years old, *dix cors*; at eight years old, he acquires the distinguished title of *vieux cerf*, and afterwards becomes a majestic *grand vieux cerf*.

The old stags shed their horns in the month of February; *le cerf dix cors*, in March, and the others (except the *daguet*s), in April, and the *daguet*s not until June. When the stag sheds his horns, he retires into some remote part of the forest where there is good pasturage, and remains there in solitude until his horns are replenished, which requires, at least, three months; and during this period he frequently plunges them into the soil which, according to its peculiar nature, gives them a brown, red, or yellowish colour. It is certainly a circumstance worthy of notice, that the stag is furnished with such splendid horns, in so very short a period, and that they acquire such extraordinary strength and hardness during their rapid growth.

When the stag is furnished with his splendid antlers, and has recovered from the effects of so great a draught upon his constitution, "*il songe à sa postérité*," he enters upon the rut, and becomes most furious: he attacks every thing he meets, and cannot be approached without considerable danger. He rests neither night nor day; eats but

little , and fights his brethren with the utmost inveteracy : in these conflicts they sometimes get their branching horns so entangled in each other , that they cannot separate them , and die of starvation.

Charles the 9th , in his treatise on hunting , * informs us that he had stags horns , in his cabinet at Fontainebleau , so entangled in these conflicts , that they could not be separated by any contrivance.

Though the stag cannot , at any period of his life , be considered anything of a singer , he undoubtedly has a most powerful voice , and , during the rutting season , makes no small use of it : he fills the forest with the most hideous and horrifying noises imaginable ; he commences at sunset , and continues during the whole night.

He has also some very peculiar habits : he is quite a temperance society gentleman during the winter , which is just the period when you or I would like a good glass of chambertin and a bit of jocose conversation in some snug corner : to use the appropriate phrase , he never touches a drop of anything in the winter : the dew on the grass suffices to quench his thirst : but this dew sipping system yields to better taste in the summer months,

* *La chasse royale* , par Charles the 9th , roi de France.

and particularly in the sultry season when, he lapses into perfect drunkenness ; and , not content with the most liberal potations , he plunges into rivers , lakes and ponds , as if he could never get enough of it , and even swims into the briny deep to cool himself.

The stag is an animal of noble dimensions and of a beautiful rotundity of form , he has long and slender legs , brilliant eyes , a most acute sense of hearing , and the nicest olfactory nerves in the universe , and is an accomplished swimmer. He stands about three feet and a half in height , nothing can exceed the beauty of his neck , head and branching antlers ; he feeds on the bark of trees , grass , moss , etc.

The Hind has seldom more than one fawn , but may have two : They are sometimes barren , and are then called *Brehaignes* , and are said occasionally to have horns. This , however, appears to be a disputed question , and the assertion is probably without foundation.

In former times , when the anatomy of the stag was better understood than it is at present , hunters found a small cross-shaped bone in the stag's heart , which possessed many medical virtues, but which has not been discovered in the heart of any modern stag : that you may form a just estimate of

the loss we sustain in not being able to discover *la croix du cerf* , I shall enumerate a few of its miraculous powers : it alleviated the pains of child-birth , cured diseases of the heart, procured a new supply of teeth in old age , and even enabled the possessor to discover stolen goods. It is ten thousand pities it has gone astray.

The period of gestation is said to be eight months and *some days* ; I cannot ascertain how many. It reminds one, of the answer so frequently given by some funny people in the far west : “ How far is it from Cahirciveen , Pat ? Six miles , and a *bit* , your honour.” The *bit* may be six more. The mode of computation is simple , he gives the distance as far as he is acquainted with the road , and calls the remainder , be the same more or less , “ a *bit*.”





CHAPTER III.

**The fallow deer—Mode of hunting—Not common in France—
Most pugnacious animals—Fight regular battles—Strange
antipathies—Curious, but cruel mode, of fattening fawns.**

Though the fallow deer are a distinct race, yet they bear considerable resemblance to the red deer, and are hunted in much the same manner, except that, as they are usually found in numerous herds, the *limier* is not employed in searching for them, and a few well trained dogs answer the purpose.

When the herd is roused, every effort is made

to separate a suitable buck for the chase, and, as soon as that is effected, the hounds are uncoupled and laid on the scent. The buck neither sets off at the same rapid pace, nor affords the same sport as the stag; but winds about his haunts, and tries by numerous shifts and artifices, to baffle the dogs, seldom relying upon any decisive effort to get clear of his enemies.

All hounds prefer the venison of the fallow deer to any other game; and, if they once taste it, will quit the stag to hunt the fallow deer, whenever they can.

Fallow deer are neither common nor much esteemed in France, where their venison is not so highly prized as with us. There are, however, some in the neighbourhood of Paris, and a few scattered through the provinces, chiefly where proprietors of large forests have introduced them for their own gratification: thus they are found in the forest of Cardrecieux, in the department of Sarthe, and the famous forest of Ardennes, extending along the Meuse, which contains one million twenty nine thousand square acres of land!

They are most pugnacious animals, and fight with unyielding obstinacy either for the doe or for favourite pastures. In their agrarian conflicts, they divide into different parties: the oldest buck

in each heads his division , and leads them on to battle. They never cease fighting until one party is vanquished , and driven from the field of which, the victorious herd retains possession. They have much antipathy to the red deer , and cannot be induced to herd with them.

These antipathies deserve some attention : They are too uniform to be deemed capricious or accidental : They are evidently fortifications erected by the hand of Providence , to preserve distinct races from intermixture and deterioration, and are always most insurmountable where the danger is most threatening : thus , these protective feuds are placed between the red and the fallow deer , the rabbit and the hare, the red and the gray partridge, the dog and the cat , and exist in a thousand instances which might be enumerated.

The botanist , in his researches , will also find the inflexible laws of nature rigidly protecting the different vegetable classes , and preserving their distinctive characters : thus it is that , when we attempt to counteract this harmonious arrangement , and succeed in producing hybrid plants , however beautiful they may be , however perfect they may appear , they are denied the power of ripening seed , and want that indestructibility which characterises the works of nature , and dis-

tinguishes them from the contrivances of art.

The fallow deer are well known as domestic animals, and need scarcely be described here. They are, except perhaps in Spain, much smaller than the red deer, and also much shorter lived. They are found in America; but the received opinion is that they were introduced into America from Europe. The period of gestation is the same as that of the red deer, and, like them, they usually have a single fawn, and very rarely two.

A friend of mine, who possesses an extensive deer park, and is a thorough bred gnostic, gave me the following account of the mode, adopted by his keeper, to procure the finest fawns for his table: As soon as the fawn is dropped, the cruel keeper cuts its little feet in such a way, that the poor creature cannot stand upon them without inconvenience. The doe, finding it unable to move, redoubles her attention, nurses it with the greatest solicitude, and pampers it with milk until it grows into an unmixed lump of fat, without either lean or bone in it, and is, as my friend expresses it, exquisitely delicious.





CHAPTER IV.

The roe buck—How searched for—How hunted—Cunning dodges to elude the hounds—Wonderful fidelity of the doe—Sometimes shot for the sake of its venison—Easily tumbled if hit—But a most difficult shot if alarmed—Where found in France.

The roe buck is a beautiful and an extremely graceful animal, affords the most agreeable sport, and furnishes the most exquisite venison.

Like the fallow deer, he depends more upon his subtilty and cunning, than upon his almost incredible swiftness. At the outset he contrives to get well clear of his pursuers, and then commences a series of the most curious expedients to prevent his being again discovered by his enemies.

In searching for a roe buck, if the object be only to find out his haunt, and to provide a suitable buck for a future hunt, the *valet* takes his *limier* on the leash, and, with his aid, soon finds the chevreuil lying in his snug form. Having thus found him, he rouses him, sees that he is fit for the purpose, and then immediately retires. The poor roe buck, considering all danger over, soon settles down again, in the full confidence of enjoying his repose, little suspecting the very unfriendly nature of the visit, or that he is so unkindly selected for the chase.

But, if the object be immediate sport, as soon as the trail is discovered, the hounds are encouraged on, in the ordinary way, until they start the game. This, the norman sportsmen call hunting *à la billebaude*: when the roe buck is roused from his form, a cry is raised and as much noise made as possible: away he goes like a flash of lightning, leaving the best hounds far behind.

Once clear of his enemies, he doubles on his track, bounds from place to place in a zigzag, irregular course, and when he thinks his object sufficiently accomplished, he takes an immense bound into some well selected thicket, and crouches close to the ground. In this position he

awaits the result , and is so confident of success , that he permits the whole party to come up without attempting to move from his hiding place. When again forced to take flight , he tries some new device , or winds about his old haunts where his faithful doe remains ; who finding him thus pressed , comes at once to his rescue , and endeavours to draw off the hounds , at the risk of her own life !

In consequence of the great superiority of the venison , the roe buck is frequently shot. When this course is pursued , sportsmen hunt him with a few hounds, and post themselves at places where they conceive it likely that he may pass : or , they send a number of beaters into the cover, who walk leisurely through it and start him as quietly as they can, when he generally presents an easy shot.

In winter they employ deer shot ; in summer , high duck shot is considered sufficient for the purpose.

It is not difficult to bring down the roe buck : if hit in the head, or shoulder, he generally tumbles. But , from the peculiarly light manner in which he bounds along , and the extreme rapidity of his movements *when alarmed* , the roe buck is considered a most difficult shot.

None but professed poachers shoot the doe, and

I need not tell you that , they go on grab law, and pay no attention to sporting regulations.

The poor roe buck is sometimes killed by the *braconniers à l'affût* ; which is no more than ascertaining the track or path , by which he goes to feed , or to drink , at particular hours, waylaying and shooting him: if he approaches the *chasseur* quietly and apparently without suspicion, he may be easily shot ; but if , on the contrary , he suspects any danger , he passes like lightning , and the most expert shot can scarcely hit him.

There are two varieties of the roe buck in France; the red and the brown. The brown are considered to afford the best venison , and are in their prime at two years old.

Towards the end of the first year , the roe buck gets two little horns , and is called *brocard* ; the third year he gets two antlers on each of his horns, one before , and the other behind , and the number increases annually , until he has ten. They cast their horns about the end of autumn , and renew them during the winter. They require a large range , and never thrive when confined in small parks

There is something peculiarly interesting in the domestic habits of these beautiful little animals. They are truly said to live *en famille* : They re-

main with their fawns , and never mix with strangers , even of their own race.

They live together on the border of a wood adjoining some cultivated ground , and are found in most of the forests and woods throughout Normandy and Britany , and in the Ardennes , where they are frequently hunted and afford excellent sport.

In winter they inhabit brushwood on the sides of sloping hills , and live upon heath , rushes , broom , the husks of nuts , and the catkins of the willow and the hazel. In the spring they eat the young buds of trees. In summer they frequent young plantations , and rarely ever quit the shade , unless to procure water , which they require at this season.

In Normandy the *chevreuils* are found in the following forests : in the department of Orne ; in the forests of Andaine or Domfront , S'-Clair , Alençon and Perche. In the department of Eure ; in the forests of Monfort , Louviers , Bard , Longboël and Lyons , and in the department of Seine-Inférieure ; in the forests of Rawy , Maulévriez , Brothonne , Trait-Verte , Roumare , Lalonde and Rouvray.

In Britany which indeed is their head quarters ; they are found in the following forests : in the

department of **Ille-et-Vilaine**, in the forest of **Fougères**, **Villecartier**, **Rennes**, **St.-Pierre**, **Chevré**, **Guerche**, **d'Arèze**, **Paimpont** and **Teillaye**; and in the department of **Loire-Inférieure**, in the forests of **Juigné**, **Vieux-Rault** and **Gavre**.

They are also found in the department of **Mayenne**, in the forest of **Mayenne**; and the department of **Sarthe**, in the forests of **Perseigne**, **Bonnétable**, **Montmirail**, **Vibraye**, **Cardrecieux** and **Bercé**.





CHAPTER V.

Boar hunters, how equipped—An American Lady's description of the boar's tusks—His destructive habits—Formerly prosecuted, tried, judged and executed according to law, in France—How hunted—Principal danger of boar hunting—An extraordinary boar killed in France, in 1859—Where found in France—Migratory habits of the Boar.

Hunting the wild boar is both a laborious and dangerous amusement ; and is not likely to suit the taste of those effeminate cockney sportsmen , who delight in new scarlet hunting frocks , flashy waistcoats , tight doeskins , brilliant top boots ,

twinkling spurs , and nice kid gloves , and who uniformly select the most circuitous way out of town , passing through a long train of fashionable squares , and populous thoroughfares *en route* for the field .

Boar hunters must be equipped in a very different manner , unless they fancy being *chawed up* by the *vieux solitaire* , who would think no more of bolting a raw cockney sportsman , than some of our amiable and efficient friends , at the Mansion-house do, of swallowing a fresh Colchester oyster, or a ladle full of mullygatawny soup.

Of all the beasts of the chase , in France , the *vieux solitaire* is the most savage and perilous to encounter. His strength and ferocity are perfectly astonishing; he is armed with tusks which protrude several inches , and are as sharp as any knife-grinder could make them. It is said that an American lady, had her face cut in a deplorable manner from merely looking at them.

The boar hunter , however , is fully prepared to deal with his savage antagonist : he is armed with a gun, or *carabine*, furnished with a spring bayonet, and loaded with ball , or slugs , and a peculiarly constructed *couteau de chasse* with which he can cut , or stab as occasion may require.

Where large hunting establishments are kept ,

the *limier* is employed, as in stag hunting, in tracing out the *vieux solitaire*; and the *valets de limier* and *piqueurs* can without much difficulty, distinguish his tracks from those of the sow, or young boars, they are also well acquainted with his habits.

In the winter months, he frequents the densest parts of the forest; and, in the summer months, enjoys himself, wallowing in some swampy locality, from whence he proceeds, in the dusk of the evening, to ravage the surrounding country, where he commits the most frightful depredations, especially in vineyards and warrens.

It is wonderful with what facility he roots out the poor rabbits, and devours them, *fur and all*; he requires no piquant sauce to stimulate his voracious appetite: he patronises no such nonsense.*

After his foraging excursion, he returns to his haunt and settles himself for the day. On entering the forest he adopts a curious precaution to baffle his enemies: when he has proceeded a short dis-

* Formerly pigs were prosecuted for their crimes, tried, judged and executed according to law. "On the 2nd June 1446 the executioner of Ipres hung a pig, at Bailleul, in Flandres, convicted of having murdered and partly eaten the child of Mathew Cup, in the Parish of Meteren within the jurisdiction of Bailleul." *Archives historiques et littéraires*, par MM. Aimé Jéaux et Arthur Dinaux, t. I, p. 84.

tance , he returns on his own track , and enters in another place , and again returns in like manner , and repeats this manœuvre several times before he proceeds to his haunt.

The *valet de limier* , however , is aware of all his schemes , and soon discovers the right trail.

When a boar has been frequently hunted , he becomes exceedingly wary, quits his lair at the approach of the hounds, and flies with considerable rapidity : but the scent is so rank , the dogs have no difficulty in picking it up, and soon overtake him.

He , however , sometimes shows more pluck , awaits the arrival of his assailants , wages immediate war with them , and commits dreadful havoc amongst the dogs.

In these cases , the main object is to compel him to fly, which fatigues him and reduces his strength : for this purpose , the hunters assail him in the most uproarious manner, and make the forest ring with shouts and yells , and gun shots , and the most unearthly noises imaginable. When they succeed in this manœuvre , he stoops his head and bolts off with the utmost violence , never deviating from a direct line , unless when coerced by some perfectly insurmountable obstruction : Thus , he rushes on , like a steam engine , bearing down everything before him.

He, sometimes, bursts forth from a dense part of the forest, quite unexpectedly; and, if a horseman happens then to be in the line of his motion, and is unable to get out of his course with sufficient quickness, the infuriated animal seldom fails to inflict some dreadful wounds with his sharp tusks, which is one of the principal dangers in boar hunting.

When the boar begins to flag and feels fatigued by the chase, he selects some strong position, gets his back to a rock, or to a tree, and prepares to receive his enemies on his well polished tusks. If the hunters be far behind, and he has sufficient time, he generally strews the battle field with the killed and wounded; but they soon come up, and send their bullets and slugs whistling into his brawny carcass: their bullets however, produce but little effect, unless they enter the loin or shoulder, or the flank, which presents but a small vulnerable part, and which it requires a dexterous hand to hit.

Some also endeavour to get a stab at him in the rear, while he is thus busily engaged in front with his numerous and noisy assailants. He will sometimes, when thus worried, bolt off a second, and even a third time; and no human power can resist him in his progress. On these occasions,

if he make a direct charge at any of the party , which he will scarcely ever do , except in the rutting season , when he is perfectly furious , or to retaliate a sore blow , or when injudiciously obstructed by a single hunter, the assailed party must elude , and not attempt to resist him ; he should step aside , get out of the line of his motion (from which he cannot swerve,) and try to stab him as he passes.

An expert hand may sometimes deal him a death blow *en passant* ; if not , away he goes for another start which terminates in a similar fight , or in his receiving a mortal wound from some well aimed shot ; and when the infuriated *solitaire* is thus rolled over , he generally still retains sufficient strength to do much mischief in his last struggles , if incautiously approached by either dogs or men. Care is therefore taken to despatch him as expeditiously as possible , and to keep the dogs from him until all is made safe.

Those who hunt the *vieux solitaire* in a less formal manner , and with a less expensive equipage , employ a few couple of the strongest dogs they can procure ; (bull dogs are much esteemed for the purpose,) and search for him in his favourite haunts, taking especial care to keep near the dogs to prevent a disadvantageous conflict with him , at starting,

As the remainder of the proceedings differ little from those already described, they need not be further noticed.

When the *vieux solitaire* is despatched, the hunters draw his blood, and allow the dogs to enjoy the spoil; but they seldom eat any of his flesh, and should never be encouraged to do so, as it is apt to sicken them.

In the year 1829, there was a boar killed in the forest of Comillau, near Bourbonne-les-bains, in the department of Marne, that had ravaged the country for some years: he had destroyed several packs of hounds in the fruitless chase, and fought innumerable bloody battles. He weighed 485 pounds, and had above 30 balls lodged in his body when he fell.



Boars are found in most of the large forests throughout France; particularly in the Southern and Western departments, and are much hunted in Normandy and Britany.

They abound in the forests of Andaine or Domfront, Alençon, Bellesme and Perche, in the department of Orne; in the forests of Paimpont and de la Guerche, in the department of Ille-et-Vilaine; in the

forest of Mayenne or Chailland, in the department of Mayenne; in the forests of Perseigne and Bonnetable, in the department of Sarthe; and in the famous forest of the Ardennes, in the department of Ardennes.

Monsieur Le Masson tells us that, there is a peculiar breed in lower Normandy which, tho' much inferior to the common black boar in size, is considered more ferocious and fights with still greater inveteracy.

They occasionally migrate in large herds, in search of places more suitable to their taste, and nothing can impede their progress on these migratory journeys. They swim across rivers, clamber over ice, and burst through all sorts of inclosures with the utmost facility, never turning out of their course in search of an easier passage; but forcing on through all obstructions until they attain their object. They also very frequently change from one forest to another, especially in the rutting season.

The boar, like the stag, acquires different names according to his age: until he is six months old, he is called *marcassin*; from thence until he is a year old, he is called *bête rousse*. When a year old, he appears to be considered introducable into society, for he is then, and from thence until

he is three years old , called *bête de compagnie*. At three years old , he is named *tiers an* ; at four years old , *quart an* , after which he becomes *vieux sanglier* ; *grand vieux sanglier*, and finally, *un solitaire*.

He takes four or five years to attain his full growth , and lives about thirty years. The sow commences breeding at one year old. The rutting season is in January and February ; and the sow only breeds once a year. She generally has from six to ten , and seldom more , at a litter. She suckles them for three or four months; but superintends and guides them through the forest , until they are quite strong enough to take care of themselves.

Le maréchal de Vauban wrote a treatise on these animals , which he facetiously called his *cechonnerie*. His calculation is that the posterity of a single sow might , in eleven years , amount to the enormous number of 6,434,835! this seems scarcely credible.

The Romans had two remarkable methods of dressing the wild boar : in both cases they were served up entire.

One consisted in roasting one side and boiling the other , so that each guest might indulge his peculiar fancy. The other was most singular, and

consisted in roasting the entire and stuffing it with the greatest variety of game and fish.

The French imitation of this dish appears better worth the consideration of our respected gastronomists at the Mansion-house.

In the year 1718 , the profuse and tasteful Duchesse de Berry gave a grand entertainment at the palais du Luxembourg , at which an ox was served entire , stuffed from its tail to its horns , with all sorts of fowl... What a splendid sight it would be at a lord Mayor's feast !

The head of the boar is considered the ne plus ultra of piggishness : it is generally served up cold with a lemon in its mouth : You may meet with it up the Rhine served in that fashion.





CHAPTER VI.

The incredible depredations of the wolf—Rewards for killing. How hunted—Enormous packs of hounds necessary for wolf hunting—How made up in Britany—His wonderful strength—Prodigious wolf killed in 1839 in the Manche—Wolf battue—Tour-à-loup—Wolves attack cattle in Britany—They defend themselves in a curious manner—Where found in France—Natural history of.

No beast of the chase is more universally detested than the wolf : his endless depredations in the wolf districts throughout France, must appear

fabulous to those who are unacquainted with such matters. M. Le Masson assures us that the annual pecuniary losses occasioned by a few wolves, in a small district in the department of Manche, exceed 20,000 francs ! and he justly complains that those salutary laws , formerly enacted to promote their destruction, have been most injudiciously relaxed, and the public rewards , offered for killing them , reduced to mere nominal sums which afford no adequate remuneration for so laborious and so difficult an undertaking.

Thus , in the year 1814 , the *louveteurs** were allowed the privilege of hunting wolves , twice a month , in all forests rented by sportsmen from the state ; which privilege has , by an ordinance of the 24th July 1832 , been wholly withdrawn.

The rewards too , which were heretofore considerable , namely : for killing a wolf , 200 francs ; for a she-wolf , with young , 300 francs ; for a she-wolf , not with young , 250 francs , and for a young wolf , 20 francs , are now for killing a wolf , 12 francs ; for a she-wolf , with young , 18 francs ; for a she-wolf , not with young , 15 francs , and for a young wolf only 6 francs. Nor has this reduction

* *Louvetiers* are public officers appointed in the wolf districts to superintend and encourage the destruction of wolves , etc.

been made in consequence of any supposed diminution in the number of these noxious animals, or of any falling off in their depredations, for, on the contrary, it is admitted that they are much on the increase in France.

The principal difficulty wolf hunters have to encounter is that of forcing the wolf to quit the cover, which cannot be effected without a powerful and well appointed pack of hounds; from 50 to 60 couple are not considered more than sufficient for the purpose. Such establishments are too expensive to be very numerous in any country but, there are nevertheless several such packs kept expressly for wolf hunting in Normandy and Britany, and also in various departments throughout France.

In wolf hunting, they enter the forest as quietly as possible, and thus endeavour to get near the wolf before he starts, which is a matter of considerable difficulty, as he is always on the alert, and has so quick a perception of their approach that he generally steals off before they come up with him. If the forest be large and sufficiently dense to afford him protection, he can seldom be forced to quit it; he then twists and doubles through all its intricacies with which he is thoroughly acquainted, and exerts all his subtlety to baffle his enemies. The hunters have no remedy but to

press on the hounds, and thus endeavour to overpower him, and compel him to bolt, or to hunt him down in the cover: but if he be found in a less extensive forest, or one which does not afford him sufficient scope to play off his cunning dodges, he saves them all trouble on that score, at once decides on starting for some distant forest, perhaps some 15 or 20 miles off, where he knows he shall find ample protection, and dashes away like lightning; they then come in for a splendid run, so graphically described by lord Byron, as:

“The wolf’s long gallop which can tire
“The hounds deep hate, and hunters fire.”

Where large packs of hounds are not kept for wolf hunting, a different method is pursued, and the party consists both of hunting and shooting sportsmen: * the former take whatever hounds they can command and hunt him in the usual way; while the latter form themselves into a sort of rifle brigade, and take up positions in the forest where

* In Britany they have an excellent mode of sustaining suitable packs of hounds for boar and wolf hunting, each sportsman keeps a few couple, and when all are united they form a powerful pack.

they think he is likely to run , in expectation of obtaining a shot at him *en passant*.

They are obliged to observe the strictest silence , and to conceal themselves with the utmost caution , for the wolf , being peculiarly quick sighted , proceeds with great circumspection , and carefully examines every object before him.

When a wolf is either run down , or severely wounded , every exertion is made to prevent the dogs from incautiously closing upon him , as there is no end to the slaughter he sometimes makes amongst them , on these occasions. He is, therefore , usually finished up with a *coup de fusil* to save the dogs from the fatal consequences of a fight.

The powerful strength and decided superiority of a wolf over the best dogs, is worthy of notice ; and has been fully established by various experiments. Louis the 13th procured an old wolf , and let some of his strongest dogs at him by three at a time ; he soon despatched twelve of them without much trouble to himself , and without sustaining any serious injury in the conflict. The noise he made snapping his teeth , was considered to resemble that which the French carters make when cracking their whips. What a nice pair of nut crackers he must have had !

On the 2^d of May 1839 a prodigious wolf was

found in the forest of Mortain , in the department of Manche, and , after being hunted for upwards of four hours by the count de Bonvouloir's celebrated hounds , he was fired at by M^r Bonnesœur (an intrepid wolf hunter in that part of the country), who tumbled him on the spot : he rolled over , uttering a piercing and terrific yell , scrambled again upon his legs and gave another hour's good running , after which , being closely pressed , he betook himself to a cavity in a rock, but not before he had severely injured several of the dogs. He was finally shot by one of the *piqueurs*.*

Hounds very seldom touch a dead wolf : nevertheless M^r Gandon of Rennes is said to have had some dogs , in his famous pack , less squeamish in their taste , that condescended to feed upon his loathsome carcass.

When it is ascertained that a wolf is lurking in a particular locality , the *louveter* of the district assembles as many *chasseurs* as possible ; and , assuming the command of the party , proceeds to the cover, stations his *chasseurs* in the best positions he can select, and then enters the wood with a few beaters.

As soon as the wolf perceives them advancing ,

* *Nouvelle vénerie normande* , p. 255.

he endeavours to steal off unobserved , finds all the passes guarded, and meets with a warm reception from his concealed enemies. They generally aim at his shoulder , but if there is any bungling , and he returns into the wood , it is quite hopeless to think of forcing him out a second time. It would be easier to hunt a rabbit out of an acre of furze , (which is no easy matter , I can assure you). than, to compel him to break cover again : he must then be dealt with in some other manner , and the difficulty of getting at him , is considerably increased.

The most effectual method of destroying these detestable animals , when a neighbourhood is infested with them , is the general wolf battue : it is called *traque* in many parts of the country , from the word *traqueur* ; the synonyme of our word *beater*. This wolf battue is conducted by the *louvétier* of the district , and is a very formidable and curious proceeding. He assembles several hundred persons armed with guns, staves, pitchforks, swords and all manner of destructive weapons ; and , after disposing a long train of shooters and placing them so that nothing can escape without coming under their fire ; he then forms his *traqueurs* into lines , placing them sufficiently near to each other to preclude the possibility of any wolves passing between them. When they are thus ar-

ranged , he gives the signal , and they immediately commence striking the trees and bushes with their sticks and pitchforks , firing off guns and pistols , blowing horns , beating drums , and making all manner of hideous noises , advancing at the same time in a slow and regular manner, so that nothing can get through their lines , and thus driving all before them. The wolves thus frightened by the din of war , lay aside their repugnance to the open country , and break cover in all directions. The slaughter then commences, and they are shot while endeavouring to make their escape.

It is somewhat after this fashion that they conduct the *battues aux élans* in Russia , where above 300 men , women , and children , all unite , in the truly laborious task of beating a Russian forest. The *chasseurs* remain at their posts , knee deep in snow , and nearly frozen to death , in expectation of a shot at these noble animals. Monsieur Viardot gives us the following description of the élan in his entertaining work : * “ L'élan , comme on sait , est le cerf du Nord. On ne le rencontre pas avant le Niémen. Il est moins élégant que le cerf de forme et d'alignement , mais beaucoup plus grand ,

* *Souvenirs de chasses en Europe* , par LOUIS VIARDOT, 1846.

“ plus gros, plus fort. Ses bois sont aussi moins
“ haute et moins droits , mais ils s’étendent en
“ plus larges rameaux autour de sa puissante
“ tête et de son énorme cou , sous lequel pend ,
“ comme la clochette des vaches , une assez lon-
“ gue glande velue. Sa chair est fort bonne à
“ manger : sans avoir toute la friande délicatesse
“ de celle du chevreuil, elle est plus tendre et plus
“ fine que celle du cerf , elle ressemble assez au
“ filet de bœuf, relevé par un fort goût de venai-
“ son. ” Monsieur Viardot in one of his battue
excursions , shot two of these splendid animals ,
as, we sometimes knock down a brace of snipe ,
right and left , they were estimated as weighing
350 kilogrammes (772^{lb} English) each.

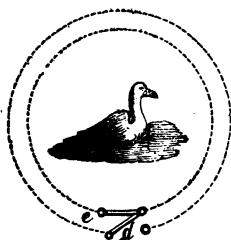
When wolves are not sufficiently numerous to demand such tumultuous proceedings ; or when the forests are too extensive for the adoption of the battue system , various contrivances are set on foot to entrap them. Of these , the *tour à loup* which is considered very destructive , is worthy of notice : it is constructed as follows : some convenient spot is selected in the vicinity of a farm house , or in some locality where they are in the habit of committing nocturnal depredations : a circle is described , of from 8 to 10 feet in diameter ; good strong stakes of , at least , 10 feet in

length , are then procured ; they are pointed at one end and driven firmly into the ground in the circumference of the circle , at a distance of 5 inches apart from each other , leaving one open space of 18 inches only, for an entrance.

A second circle is then described with the same centre, so that its circumference may lie within 16 inches of the outer circle. Similar stakes are then firmly driven down in the circumference of the inner circle, at a like distance from each other, and without leaving any aperture for an entrance : the circular path lying between the two rows of stakes is well trodden down, to represent a beaten path : the door , which should be made of good strong timber , is then hung on easy iron hinges , and so contrived (by means of a latch falling into its proper place) that when shut *from the inside* , it shall remain fast. A goose , or a sheep , is then placed in the central space , from whence it cannot escape , and the door , (which opens inwards), is left open , and stops up the passage on one side.*

The wolf , attracted by the animal within , approaches with his usual caution ; and , at length ,

* For a description of the *tour à loup*, very fully given , see *Manuel du destructeur des Animaux nuisibles, faisant partie de l'Encyclopédie-Roret* , p. 44.



seeing the door open , and the beaten path before him enters (*at d*). Once in, he cannot turn in the narrow path , and proceeds round until he arrives (*at c*) behind the door which , he pushes on, and closes upon himself.

He is then in close custody , to the no small gratification of the farmer and his goose , and soon pays for all his crimes.

The wolves in Britany frequently attack the cattle in the fields , and the method they adopt of defending themselves is most curious. As soon as they perceive the wolves approaching , they form themselves into a circle , collect all the young cattle in the centre , and receive the wolves upon their horns : when they have time to effect this manœuvre, they are impregnable. They sometimes pursue the wolves and hunt them to considerable distances , and , on these occasions , no fences can impede their progress ; they become quite infuriated and tear down , or burst through every thing that comes in their way.

Wolves abound in the following forests in Normandy ; namely , in the forest of Mortain , in the department of the Manche ; in the forest of S'-Sever,

in the department of Calvados ; and in the forests of Andaine or Domfront , Alençon , Mesnil-Broult , Bellesme and Perche in the department of Orne ; and also in the following forests in Britany, namely : in the forests of Fougères , Villecartier , Rennes and Paimpont, in the department of Ille-et-Vilaine ; and in the forest of Juigné , in the departement of Loire-Inferieure ; also in the forest of Mayenne , in the department of Mayenne ; and in the forest of Perseigne , in the department of Sarthe ; and in numerous other forests throughout France.



The wolf in some respects resembles the dog : his head , however, is strikingly different ; he has a peculiarly sinister cast of countenance ; his eyes are sparkling and very luminous at night ; his snout is long and blunt , his ears short and erect , his tail straight, thick and covered with long hair. Buffon gives a very unflattering account of him.*

They are found all over Europe and also throughout America, and there are many varieties of them.

* Désagréable en tout : la mine basse , l'odeur insupportable , le naturel pervers , les mœurs féroces : il est odieux , nuisible de son vivant , inutile après sa mort.

The French wolf seldom exceeds 33 inches in height, or weighs more than 100 pounds. The colour of the body is, in general, a mixture of fawn colour, gray, and white. But there are two sorts of black wolves in lower Normandy ; one with shaggy hair , the other quite smooth , (like a greyhound). They have both been found in the forests of Alençon and S'-Sever already mentioned.

Wolves are both intractable and treacherous. Buffon states that he reared two , and that after being apparently quite reconciled to all around them and perfectly inoffensive for two years , one of them suddenly broke from his chain , turned upon the fowl , killed them all , took flight , and escaped. The other , in like manner got loose , turned upon a dog with which he was reared , killed him and made his escape.

M. le Masson tells us that he got a cub only 15 days old , that he reared him on dry bread and *soupe maigre* ; that he had him for two years ; that he hunted with the dogs and barked and imitated them in giving tongue, and never showed the least disposition to do any mischief.

Perhaps M. le Masson may , in the next edition of his very interesting and useful work , give us some further account of his conduct : it affords such convincing proof of the reclamatory influence

of *soupe maigre* that we may expect to see it prescribed instead of *pain sec* for all refractory boys in the French colleges.

The young cub while under 6 months old , is called *louveteau* ; at six months old , he takes the name of *louwart* ; at one year old he becomes *jeune loup* ; at three years old , *vieux loup* , and after four years old , *grand vieux loup* : he takes two years to attain his full growth , and lives from 15 to 20 years. The female does not breed until she is two years old , and is not above 15 days in heat. The oldest commence in July , the others in February and March. The period of gestation is three months and a half , and they usually have from 3 to 9 cubs.

The wolf searches out some old badger's nest in the neighbourhood of water , makes it sufficiently large for her accommodation , collects moss and dried grass for a bed , establishes herself at the entrance of it , and there suckles her cubs for some weeks. If she be alarmed for their safety , she , at once , conveys them to a considerable distance where , she has a place already prepared for their reception , in anticipation of being compelled to remove them : this is a curious arrangement , and shows great forethought and sagacity in these animals.

The wolf is subject to madness ; and then becomes a dreadful scourge on the country ; there was an instance of this some years since in Normandy ; the animal ravaged the whole country , carrying death and desolation every where it went.

It is confidently asserted that the wolf can communicate this terrific disease, when in a high state of excitement ; without being itself diseased ; and some very striking instances are given in support of this strange theory , but it cannot be considered as established , and may well be doubted.

When once the wolf tastes human flesh , he becomes perfectly ferocious , and no longer hesitates to attack men , whenever he can do so with any chance of success , perhaps the most daring instance of such an attack on record , is related by Monsieur Viardot , in his *Souvenirs de chasses (en Russie)* , which he gives as follows :
“ J’ai ouï conter bien des accidents , bien des
“ prises de bestiaux , bien des meurtres d’hommes
“ commis par les loups , mais voici , de
“ toutes ces histoires , la plus lamentable et la
“ plus étonnante , très-vraie pourtant , et justifiée
“ par des preuves authentiques : Pendant l’année
“ 1812 , de fatale mémoire , un détachement
“ de soldats (on dit quatre-vingts hommes) qui
“ changeaient de cantonnement dans un gouver-

“ nement du centre , furent attaqués la nuit par
“ une nombreuse troupe de loups et tous dévorés
“ sur la place. Au milieu des débris d’armes et
“ d’uniformes qui jonchaient le champ de ba-
“ taille , on trouva les cadavres de deux ou trois
“ cents loups tués à coups de balles , de bayon-
“ nettes et de crosses de fusil. ”

The Italian wolves are said to be remarkably fond of asses. It is strange that they do not rise *en masse* and possess themselves of the town of Bologna , it being a well known fact that the much esteemed Bologna sausages are all made of that patient and very ill treated animal.





CHAPTER VII.

Fox hunting how conducted in France—His cunning shifts to evade the hounds—Different sorts of foxes—Vocal powers of the fox—Propriety of cultivating them—Best mode of dressing a fox.

Fox hunting, which is the favourite amusement of the British sportsman, and upon which such extravagant sums of money are annually expended in England, is by no means in such high estimation in France where the fox is treated rather as vermin than as game, and is seldom hunted in a sportsmanlike manner.

The preliminary arrangements for a fox hunt

are every where alike : all the earths in the neighbourhood must be closed or secured the night before. This is not so laborious a task as some uninitiated persons may suppose. The fox is proverbially both timid and suspicious , and the slightest alteration in the appearance of its entrance, will scare him from his earth : he at once decides that there is some trick on foot , some trap laid for him , and sneaks off in some other direction : thus , a piece of pasteboard in a cleft stick , fastened at the entrance of a fox earth, will be found as effectual as building it up with brick and mortar.

When the fox returns from his foraging excursion with , perhaps a fat goose slung over his shoulder , and finds he cannot with safety enter his earth , he retires into some thicket , or into some dense part of the forest , where he remains until his inveterate enemies arrive and force him from his retreat.

If the cover be small , he , at once , sets off at a round pace for some extensive forest , or for some distant earth , and soon gets clear of the hounds : in such cases they come in for a noble chase , and only want a suitable country and some sporting fences to give them a taste of what we call fox hunting. If, on the contrary , the fox be found in

a large forest, he seldom quits it; but winds and doubles through its thickest and most inaccessible localities, and would baffle the best pack of dogs in the Universe, if the game were fairly left between them; but that is never done, for these hunts are attended by a numerous train of *amateurs chasseurs* who exercise their utmost skill and ingenuity in waylaying the poor hunted fox. They are generally clad in some dark dress, conceal themselves, where they conceive the fox is likely to run, and try to shoot him *en passant*, and he is thus assassinated while the hounds are pursuing him in full cry. They would not perhaps give themselves so much trouble about an animal not even fit for soup, but that he sometimes runs away with the *roti* which is undoubtedly a very grave offence.

When a fox is closely pressed by the hounds, he makes various shifts to extricate himself: he sometimes runs up a tree, and watches his enemies from the ivy-clad ramifications of some ancient oak, or runs into a warren, selects the largest burrow he can find, and squeezes himself into it, at the risk of instant suffocation.

But when driven to the last extremity, he gets into a crack in a rock, or under the root of a tree, and there gives battle to the hounds as they ap-

proach. Few ever venture to lay hold of him in such a position, and woe to the hunter who attempts to touch him! Nothing can exceed the sharpness of his teeth or his dexterity in using them.

He is generally knocked on the head, and flung amongst the dogs.

Nor do foxes always wait to be hunted and hard pressed to adopt measures for their security. I knew an instance of a fox that baffled all the efforts of his neighbours, whose turkeys, geese, and fowl, he pillaged by the dozen, for the greater part of a hunting season: he was known to frequent a particular cover of no very considerable extent, consisting of some 20 or 30 acres of young plantations in a gentleman's demesne: he was often traced into it, the hounds sent for, the cover carefully drawn, his run found and acknowledged by the hounds, and no further account obtained of his movements, no more than if the earth had opened and swallowed him up. The huntsman, at length pronounced it useless to draw the cover for him, which was sad news for the owners of the turkeys and geese which were, nevertheless, disappearing as usual. At last the gentleman's gardener, one evening, met the fox where he did not consider he had permission to be, namely in

his grapery, which stood in a garden surrounded by a wall full twelve feet high !

Away dashed *Monsieur Renard* : he ascended the wall through the branches of an old pear-tree, ran upon it for a considerable distance, and descended through some ivy on the other side.

The circumstance was immediately reported to the owner of the baffled pack : he, at once, saw how matters stood, came the following morning, drew the cover with the same result as usual, then sent a couple of dogs into the garden, found the gentleman in the flue of the grapery, and killed him after a severe run, much to the gratification of those who were so often disappointed in searching for him, and with the full approbation of every turkey and goose in the neighbourhood.

When a fox is taken alive, it is a common trick of his, to feign being dead, in which state he will allow a dog to pull him about, without betraying the least symptom of life, until a favourable opportunity arises for making his escape, when he is up and away in an instant, and when he falls into inexperienced hands he generally succeeds and effects his escape by this stratagem.

Foxes are found, in all the forests throughout France, in the greatest abundance, and are scattered through the whole country ; so that it is

quite unnecessary to give any further local information concerning them.

The natural life of the fox is estimated at 14 years, and he is two years coming to his full growth. They breed at one year old, and only once a year (which is generally considered quite often enough). The period of gestation is 50 days, and they have from 3 to 6 cubs at a time.

Most of the French foxes are red; but some of them are nearly black: these, they call by the very appropriate name of *charbonniers*. They are not a distinct race, but merely a variety, and are common in Britany, Normandy and Burgundy, and also in other parts of France.

In more northern countries, foxes are found of various shades and colours; white, black, gray, and we are told of a curious variety of the white fox, having black heads, and fawn coloured feet.

If a fox cannot procure game or fowl, he is not very fastidious; he will eat fruit, honey, moles, frogs or fish.

The fox has, as Buffon tells us, various tones of voice which he employs according to circumstances;* and it is singular that we have not yet heard of a singing fox; but perhaps we soon shall, and I

*....Il a la voix de la chasse, l'accent du désir, le son du

throw out the hint, to encourage the experiment.

M^r Le Masson assures us that he once had a very old fox prepared and dressed *en civet*, for some Parisian sportsmen who were very fond of venison, and that they took it for *chevreuil de Compiègne*. They must have been persons of exquisite discernment !



murmure , le ton plaintif de la tristesse , le cri de la douleur qu'il ne fait entendre qu'au moment où il reçoit un coup de feu qui lui casse quelque membre.

BUFFON.



CHAPTER VIII.

Hare hunting—No fixed days for—Mr Fiolet's hounds at Clair-marais , near St-Omer—In Normandy, a better description of hare hunting — Economical mode of rewarding a pack of hounds at the termination of the chase—Coursing—Contrary to law—Curious and intelligent devices of the hare to baffle the hounds—Hence considered enchanted—Natural history of—Best mode of dressing a hare.

Hare hunting in France is chiefly confined to the forests and large woods , which are usually rented by gentlemen for sporting purposes. Many of the forests are , as the French say : *bien percées* ; that is , intersected by alleys of sufficient width to allow horsemen to gallop through them without , obstruction.

The hounds are introduced into the cover, and ,

as there is no lack of game , soon have numerous hares on foot , divide into distinct packs and often run in opposite directions.

The sportsmen too who take guns with them on these hunting excursions form different parties , some on foot, others on horseback, and the slaughter , (the criterion by which they estimate the sport), is usually very considerable.

This mixture of hunting and shooting is the only thing in the shape of hunting to be met with in the north of France, and is generally conducted on foot.

The French sportsmen have not , like us , fixed days for this amusement; they are more whimsical, and perhaps more judicious in their arrangements. When the weather is suitable , and other circumstances favourable, they decide upon an excursion to the forest , organize a hunting party , and set off without further ceremony. This they can easily accomplish as they all reside within the fortifications of some small town ; but our sportsmen, who are scattered over a wide extent of country and who could not be assembled upon any other principle than that of preconcerted meetings , must go on hunting on Mondays, Wednesdays , and Fridays, be the same wet or dry , good , bad or indifferent. The French system is certainly preferable, but quite impracticable with us.

Those who wish to see some of this forest hunting on a small scale , may indulge their curiosity in the immediate vicinity of S'-Omer , where M^r Fiolet keeps a few couple of very passable hounds, and occasionally hunts in the picturesque woods of Clairmarais which he rents for the purpose. It is sometimes exceedingly interesting , at least to a sportsman , to hear their harmonious cry running through the thousand echoes of these wooded hills. I have frequently enjoyed it while fishing in the adjoining waters. The vast number of hares in these woods is perfectly astonishing.

A friend of mine , much in the habit of shooting in the *commune d'Arques* , assured me that , one morning, in the course of his progress through it, he counted no less than seventeen hares , stealing into the cover,



There is , however , in Normandy , a much better description of hare hunting , where several fine packs of hounds are kept , for the express purpose. The Norman hunting is more in accordance with English taste , is well and skilfully conducted ; and , in many respects , little inferior to our own : * but those who have been accustomed to the dashing style and matchless speed of our fine harriers , and to seeing our noble horses and their intrepid riders sweeping over a well fenced country , without a moment's pause , clearing gates , walls , and hedges , plunging into and swimming across canals and rivers ; and , I suppose , we may now add , flying over rail roads , need never expect to find any thing out of great Britain to compete with an English hunt.

The French sportsman , however , is content with his less perilous recreation : he has none of those dangerous leaps , requires no great horsemanship , and enjoys his sport after his own fashion , without incurring any of these risks which

* In our country the hounds are permitted to eat the hare ; and it is perfectly astonishing how quickly it disappears. The French sportsmen act more wisely : they give the *eats* to the hounds , and keep the rest for themselves. Directions are technically given for this curious proceeding in the *Manuel du chasseur* , page 84.



an Englishman has the courage to encounter, and either the dexterity or the good luck to escape from , every day he hunts.

The French harriers are small and carefully bred, and are considered the best dogs for hunting the roe buck, which very much resembles the hare , as well in its style of running , as in its numerous shifts and devices during the chase.

The French are fond of coursing , and have excellent greyhounds : * They course in the open country , and generally on foot , by which means

*** Under the existing laws of France, it is not allowed to employ greyhounds in hare hunting , though it is occasionally done.**

they get through the tillage ground without difficulty : they employ spaniels to seek for and start the game , and slip the greyhounds at the hare when started. Their spaniels are trained to set hares , which indeed is part of the education of all sporting dogs in France, as shall be seen when we come to treat of shooting.

This timid animal , with all its apparent simplicity, often evinces extraordinary tact , in escaping from its numerous enemies : and what , animal has more !

The poor hare scarcely ever quits its form without an unfriendly shout , or having a stick or a stone flung after it. No wonder it should lie all day trembling in its form, and only venture out at night to seek for food and stretch its crippled limbs.

“ Where shall the trembling hare a shelter find ?
“ Hark ! death advances in each gust of wind !
“ Now stratagems and doubling wiles she tries ;
“ Now circling turns and now at large she flies ,
“ Till spent at last she pants and heaves for breath,
“ Then lays her down and waits devouring death. ”

It is certainly worthy of observation that the hare , before it has ever been hunted , knows that it leaves something in its footsteps , which betrays its course ; and that all its clever shifts and devices

to elude its enemies appear to be built upon that knowledge. Does not this afford a triumphant answer to the curious doctrine of Descartes who denies that such animals have any reasoning power , and considers them as mere machines. Let us examine some of the contrivances by which they foil their pursuers , and then decide what sort of machines they are.

All sportsmen , acquainted with hare hunting , know , that they sometimes quit their forms , and swim into islands , in ponds and rivers , on the approach of hounds , and remain there until all danger is over ; that when hunted , they sometimes run into the form of a fresh hare, force it out, then return some distance *on the old track* , leap from it into a thicket or cluster of weeds , and remain there until the hounds are on the fresh hare ; that they frequently run in amongst sheep , and along dusty roads , and get upon stone walls , and run considerable distances upon them , and swim several times backwards and forwards across rivers, and then squat themselves in a tuft of rushes or sedge , approaching it from the water , all to break off the scent and baffle the dogs.

They are also known to approach their forms by several successive zigzag leaps , which those who have traced them in snow , must have fre-

quently observed : In fact , when they lose the track , they consider that the hare is not far off , and are seldom much out in their calculation.

I have known a hare conceal itself in a snipe haunt by getting off the tuft upon which it lay, and sinking itself down to its very nose in the water.

It is by such stratagems successfully employed ; that the hare has drawn upon itself the *triste* imputation of witchcraft : It could spring from no other source, and the charge has been too general throughout Europe to ascribe it to the ignorance or superstition of any particular sect or people. In Germany they relate endless stories of enchanted hares , that no dog could run down, or no sportsman kill. The small tracks made by hares, through the wheat, are there denominated *hexen steige* "the witches' paths." In France it is not uncommon to hear of a hare inhabiting a particular locality which nobody cares to fire at , conceiving it bewitched ; and , in my own sweet country , I knew an instance of a hare that afforded a celebrated pack of hounds several extraordinary runs , and always escaped. The hare was half white , and usually found in the neighbourhood of an old abbey. The common people said it was a witch , and considered it very improper to hunt it.

There is a funny story told by the author of an

old work on hunting and shooting , namely : that he had the imprudence to go out coursing on S'-Hubert's day without hearing mass ; that he met a hare that played off a great variety of tricks on the dogs , and seemed to be an overmatch for them ; and , at length , when they came up, showed them a pair of horns, saying : *N'est-ce pas bien courir pour un petit bon homme ?* and instantly disappeared.

It however abundantly appears that the hare has ever had a high reputation for extricating itself from difficulties , and , as it seems to me , much claim to be allowed the privilege of *thinking* , and sufficient capacity to manage its own affairs.

The hare is a short lived animal : they scarcely ever live more than eight or nine years , and are full grown at one year old.

The period of gestation is thirty one days , and the doe generally has two young ones , and , occasionally , three or four. It is very curious that if a hare has more than one , they each have a white star on the forehead , which they retain for a considerable time ; but if she has only one , it has no star. This is well ascertained , and is an unaccountable circumstance. She suckles them for about three weeks , and then leaves them in the best and safest place she can find to take care of themselves. The breeding season is from March

to September. The bucks fight dreadfully for the does, and sometimes are killed in the conflict.

Hares prefer those plants that have milky leaves, and are very fond of parsley. Those who wish to encourage them, cannot adopt a more effectual mode than sowing parsley with their clover and grass seeds when laying down land for permanent pasture. The parsley remains a long time in the land, and is considered wholesome food for sheep.

A hare may be eaten quite fresh ; but if not, it must be kept for some days before it is again fit for use. There can be no better mode of dressing a good hare than roasting it, *in its skin*, and no better sauce for it than currant jelly. But, if you have an old buck as tough as a pair of leather breeches, the following receipt, canonized by the adoption of Louis the 13th, will make him as tender as a sucking chicken.

RECEIPT.

Put your hare on the spit with both skin and fur on : when the fur is well dried, singe it off ; then make two shovels red hot, and, taking them alternately, put some lard on them, and allow it to drop on the hare while it turns before the fire ; and

continue doing so until you can easily pick off the skin, (without burning your fingers), then continue to baste it with melted lard , and , afterwards with vinegar, and serve it hot with whatever sauce you prefer.

The following song gives excellent directions for dressing a hare.

LIÈVRE A LA SUISSE.

AIR : *Je vous avais crue belle.*

Un levreau pour bien faire
D'abord dépouillerez :
Gardez la peau qui vous est nécessaire ,
Car , à la broche , vous l'en couvrirez.

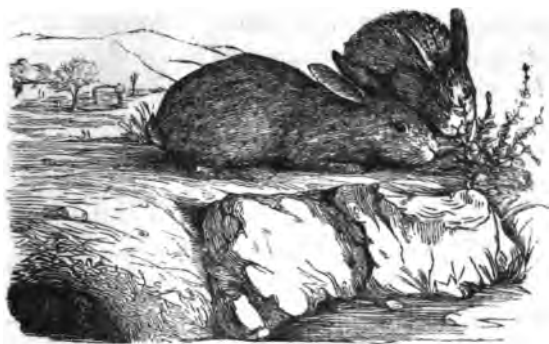
De gros lardons sur l'heure
Le levreau faut larder ,
Le farcir d'une farce , et des meilleures ,
Le coudre que rien ne puisse échapper.

Que la peau l'on remette
Puis des bardes de lard ,
Ensuite , avec du fil et cordelette ,
On y fait , de papier , un bon rempart.

Étant cuit, on déchire
La peau tout de son long :
La rémolade est la sauce qu'il désire,
Ou bien sûr une essence de jambon.

La Cuisine en Musique, par
J. LEBAS, 4758.





CHAPTER IX.

Rabbit hunting—How conducted—Royal rat hunt—Rabbit shooting, excellent sport—Natural history of—Minced chicken sometimes made of rabbit.

Rabbit hunting may perhaps sound ill in the ear of a British sportsman ; but, when conducted as it sometimes is in France , it is far from being an uninteresting pursuit.

Terriers are the dogs usually employed in this sport; and a vigorous buck will often give a brace of them more than enough to do , unless they are

assisted by the favourite *coup de fusil*, so mischievously introduced into the field sports of France, for when Monsieur becomes impatient, and over anxious to seize his prey, he is always ready to terminate the contest in that most ungenerous and unsportsmanlike manner.

When rabbit hunting is the order of the day, care is taken to stop all the earths in the warren. The adjoining cover is then carefully beaten, and the old buck is usually found in some snug corner, enjoying his repose, or basking in the sunshine. His first manœuvre is to make for his burrow. When he finds himself shut out, he never stoops to petty shifts or cowardly contrivances, but depends on his superior agility, and his thorough knowledge of all the intricacies of the place: he dashes through the thickest part of the cover, twists about, turns short, leaps over the dogs, and eludes them in a thousand ways when the game appears all but over with him: thus he, sometimes, tires out, or beats the best dogs, and only requires a clear stage and no favour, to triumph over his enemies.

When the adjoining cover is searched in vain, the warrener opens a couple of burrows, and sends in, his never failing and worrying ferret which soon produces the desired effect. The

poor terrified rabbit bolts out; the terriers are then slipped at him; away they go helter skelter, and thus the merry chase begins.

You may, gentle reader, feel disposed to ridicule those who stoop to such boyish amusement; but when you are aware that Louis the 11th, while confined to his chateau of Plessis-les-Tours, and unable to partake of his favourite sport in the forest, enjoyed the noble diversion of a royal rat hunt, and that his loyal subjects, on these occasions, furnished him with the finest rats, and most vigorous cats that could be found in *la belle France*, you may, perhaps, be induced to think more favourably of rabbit hunters, and to make a fairer allowance for their peculiar taste: *chacun son goût*.

The ferret is also employed in hunting out rabbits for those who delight in rabbit-shooting which, indeed, is excellent sport, more especially as it is considered no easy matter to hit a rabbit bounding away in his zigzag and rapid course.

The knowing ones, however, (and that most unpopular class has its unworthy representatives even amongst rabbit-shooters), have a disreputable method of depriving the poor rabbit of its legitimate chance of escape. They remain concealed at some little distance and watch for its

first appearance , at the mouth of its earth , as a rabbit always stops there , for a few seconds , before it starts for the cover , and thus they , shoot it without difficulty in the midst of its hasty deliberation. This cannot be considered a sportsmanlike way of doing business , no matter how dexterously it may be accomplished ; a true sportsman would rather miss fifty shots than take so unfair an advantage of the poor rabbit.

The rabbit , like the hare , is a short lived animal ; but to make amends , multiplies with incredible rapidity. The period of gestation is 30 days ; they have from four to ten young ones at a time. The doe seeks some retired place , makes a burrow about a yard in depth , decorates it with her own fur , and there deposits and suckles her young for six weeks or perhaps more , during which period she holds no intercourse with the buck , who is so enraged at her want of conjugal affection that , by way of revenge , he hunts out her retreat , and destroys the young ones.

The fact that he will kill , and even eat them , is unquestionable. The motive ascribed is perhaps the well founded conjecture of some very learned naturalist.

When the doe introduces the young rabbits into the warren , the buck receives them as his

own , and treats them with the greatest kindness and attention.

The best rabbits for the table are those fed in mountainous districts , where they have a variety of wild herbs to feed upon. They are not much esteemed in France , where the markets are very plentifully supplied with house-rabbits of an enormous size, and in very excellent condition ; but very inferior in flavour to the wild bush-rabbit.

It is said that Louis the 18th could , from the taste of a rabbit , tell the nature of the soil where it was fed.

I am not aware of any new receipt for dressing rabbits; but beg to suggest to the nice and curious in culinary affairs, that they make the best *minced chicken* that can be imagined , at seasons when chickens cannot be had.





CHAPTER X.

Badger hunting — How conducted — a curious animal , very destructive to game—Natural history of.

This is a nocturnal pursuit of a very barbarous character , but is nevertheless considered by some to afford excellent sport ; especially in Germany , where the badger is much prized , and most anxiously preserved for the purpose.

I scarcely think that an English sportsman would hold badger hunting in much estimation ; but he may , nevertheless , like to know how it is conducted.

The badger hunters assemble in the evening , and having provided themselves with a couple of active terriers , a well nosed good beater of any description , and the necessary implements of war ; namely , a large two pronged fork , a lantern and some good sticks , they proceed to the locality where the badger is known to spend his night on the feed , and try for him as closely as possible. When found , the terriers are at once slipped at him. The badger makes a regular stand up fight of it , and generally shows great pluck. When well knocked about and worried by his pugnacious antagonists , an opportunity is taken of placing the fork over his neck with which he is pinned down to the ground , while the rest of the party fall upon their unhappy victim with their merciless bludgeons , and beat him to death.

Such is the sad termination of this barbarous contest.

The badger is a curious animal not quite so large as a fox , and with something of the bundled up appearance of a young bear. His snout is long and clumsy looking ; his eyes small , his tail short, his colour black and grayish with a black stripe on each side of the head ; he wears a very curious pocket under his tail , from which a fetid and disgusting humour is continually oozing out ,

and for lack of better food he licks it up occasionally. He has remarkably strong claws on his forefeet, of which he makes very unscrupulous use in his troubles.

As he is always on the feed at night, so he remains at home during the day, and is often dug out and killed by amateurs. It is important on these occasions not to allow the dogs to enter into his earth. If they do, they may be certain of getting the mange, as he is never without it.

The badger lives on the verge of woods, near cultivated lands and vineyards, where he seeks his food, which consists of fruit and vegetables. He is a wholesale destroyer of game, will surprise a partridge on her nest, devour her, and eat the eggs by way of dessert which, in some degree, mitigates, the cruelty of badger hunting. The badger, in the course of the summer, has 3 or 4 young ones, and, I regret to say that, notwithstanding the great facilities afforded for educating children in France, and the general march of intellect in all parts, she brings them up in the old way, and allows them to follow her own nefarious and mischievous practices.





CHAPTER XI.

The otter—How searched for—How hunted—The severe bite of—Trained to fish for its master—Substitute for, in Ireland—Its habits and natural history.

Otter hunting is very amusing : they may be hunted with any dogs that will take the water freely and are trained to the sport.

In searching for an otter , the proper course is to proceed up the stream , because the scent descends with it , and the dogs then catch it up with wonderful expertness. One of the party should

always keep a considerable distance before the dogs, and watch closely to see the otter swimming up the river, making its escape. If the water be shallow, he gets a shot at him, or endeavours to spear him: but, if it be too deep, he gives the alarm, and the dogs are soon after him. The otter is an active and vigorous animal, and proceeds with great rapidity; nevertheless, when the water is in good condition, and not too deep, he seldom escapes; but in deep water it is extremely difficult to kill him.

When the dogs overtake and lay hold of him, he turns on them, and his bite is like the gripe of a vice: he never lets go any limb he gets hold of until he hears the bone crack, and is often speared to extricate a dog from his tenacious grasp.

It is a most curious circumstance that the otter, when wounded, immediately quits the neighbourhood, and is never seen there again.

In Sweden the otter is trained to hunt and catch fish for its master, and discharges its duty with great fidelity. When he gets fish to eat, he carefully examines them, to ascertain whether they are sufficiently fresh, as he is very particular in that respect, and in doing so, he opens their gills, and, if stale, rejects them.



A neighbour of mine , who could not get an otter for the purpose , contrived to procure an abundant supply of fish for his table in the following curious manner : A heron built its nest near his house, and let out its birds ; as

soon as the birds were sufficiently strong to require a full supply of food, he tied their legs together, and fastened them to the bottom of the nest : when the old birds went in search of food, he had the greedy young ones well stuffed with boiled potatoes , so that they were never able to eat the fish supplied for their use , and he found them safely deposited in the nest. The quantity of fish thus obtained was so enormous that I am unwilling to state it , lest it might be considered an exaggeration of mine. If you try the experiment, I recommend half boiled potatoes as they are considered extremely indigestible.

The otter is a most voracious animal : he prefers

fish to any other food ; but eats water rats , frogs , and the tender shoots of some aquatic plants , when he cannot procure more dainty fare. He lives on the banks of rivers , lakes or ponds , and is an expert fisher. When in pursuit of his prey in a river , he commences by ascending the stream for a considerable distance , and fishes home : by this means he can carry a greater load , as he is borne down by the water , and he always catches more than he can manage to eat at the moment , and keeps a well supplied larder.

They generally have three or four young ones in March or April , and turn them out to shift for themselves in six or eight weeks. They take great pains to make their nests water proof , and effect their object with astonishing skill.

Every effort should be made to destroy them , as they commit the most dreadful havoc amongst the finny tribe.

- “ Would you preserve a numerous finny race ,
- “ Let your fierce dogs the ravenous otter chase ;
- “ (Th’amphibious monster ranges all the shores ,
- “ Darts thro’the waves and every haunt explores) :
- “ Or let the gin his roving steps betray ,
- “ And save from hostile jaws the scaly prey.



PART SECOND.



ON SHOOTING.



CHAPTER I.

The pheasant—Aristocratic game—Occasionally met with in the neighbourhood of pheasantries—How enticed to particular covers—Their habits and natural history.

Pheasants are maintained by wealthy proprietors throughout the temperate climates of Europe, as a luxury for the table and to contribute to the amusement of the aristocratic sportsman.

They are extremely delicate when young, and it requires much care and skill to rear them successfully. The ordinary sportsman has very little to do with pheasant shooting either in England or

France : however, thanks to their rambling propensities and great liability to go astray in foggy weather : he now and again gets a shot at one in both countries , and it would therefore be improper to pass them by altogether.

It is considered that the pheasant is an extremely difficult shot ; they make so much noise when flushed , rise so perpendicularly , and then 'glide off with such rapidity that very few sportsmen, who meet them for the first time , can deal successfully with them. A practised artist takes them when they reach the summit of the perpendicular, just before they turn off into the horizontal line , and seldom misses them : no doubt many persons miss the pheasant from over anxiety , by reason of which they fire too soon and generally cut off part of its enormous tail.

Those who live near large pheasantries and have small covers need only sow buck wheat to attract them , and may be certain of occasionally finding some stray birds at their disposal.

They prefer low marshy ground near ponds where they have thick cover ; and , when in such situations, scarce any dog can spring them : they run and wind about and twist into their beaten tracks , and so puzzle the dog that he soon loses all trace of them. The best course to pursue in

such cases , is to press the dog at the commencement , and to try and spring them as quickly as possible.

The cock pheasant seldom associates with the hen , except in the breeding season.

At the commencement of the spring, she makes a simple nest at the foot of a tree , and lays from twelve to fifteen eggs of a greenish gray colour , spotted with brown , and not quite so large as an ordinary hen's egg. The period of her incubation is twenty four days.

Pheasants generally remain during the autumn and spring in young plantations , or low copses , from which they visit the newly sown grounds , around them , and consume a very considerable portion of the seed , thus inflicting a serious injury on agriculturists.

They only live from six to seven years.

Those who keep pheasant preserves pay great attention to breeding their birds , and usually have their eggs hatched by the common hen , and the young birds carefully reared by skilful persons thoroughly well acquainted with their wants and habits. They are very fond of maggots and pismire's eggs , but as such food cannot be easily procured in sufficient quantity they are occasionally fed on a mixture of eggs , bread crum , and lettuce

chopped up together : and are seldom at the commencement allowed anything to drink. The first moulting is considered the most critical period when, it is essential to provide the purest and freshest water for them, otherwise they get that fatal disease, the *pip*, from which they never recover.

There are various kinds of pheasants, such as the golden and silver pheasants : but they are mere show or fancy birds. The sportsman has nothing to do with such animals in his professional vocation ; so we shall leave them for the bird-fanciers, and proceed to the next chapter.





CHAPTER II.

Partridges—Are the staple game of France—L'ouverture de la chasse—How fixed and announced—A period of considerable excitement in France— The sportsmen and gastronomists all alive—The french chasseurs indefatigable beaters—How they proceed—An excellent mode of finding scattered birds when the dogs are done up — How poachers find coveys — How to deal with birds in deep cover—Wild birds still unapproachable—Safe medical advice—Hints as to shooting localities—Natural history , and different sorts of partridges—Curious mode of preserving them from nocturnal poachers.

Shooting sportsmen may consider partridges the staple game of France. They are found in the greatest abundance throughout the entire country,

which , being chiefly in tillage , affords them an ample range.

The commencement of the shooting season , *l'ouverture de la chasse* , is a period of much interest and of considerable excitement.

The prefet of the department (who may be compared to the lieutenant of an English county), after receiving an official report of the state of the crops within his jurisdiction , fixes the day for the commencement of the season. His decree is immediately transmitted to the mayors of the several *communes* throughout the department and is , by them , formally announced to the public. This course appears preferable to the English system of uniformly commencing on the 1st of September , without regard to the crops , which , in backward seasons and in late districts , often remain much longer on the ground.

In such cases the allowance of a few days might prevent both damage and annoyance , as nothing can be more repugnant to the feelings of a sportsman than the idea of trampling down corn , and kicking out beans in beating for game , except , perhaps , the uncomfortable reflection of being in the hands of a merciless *procureur du roi* for having inadvertently done so , which is universally admitted to be rather an unpleasant position.

The excitement occasioned by the opening of the shooting season is , by no means confined , to mere sporting circles : it runs through all the ramifications of society. The sportsman hails it as the revival of his cherished pursuit , and hastens to enjoy the sport. Meanwhile the luxurious gastronomist rubs his hands , and smacks his lips , in anticipation of the delicious *rôti* and his favourite *perdrix aux choux* in which , (rest assured) , he feels no small interest.

If you ramble through the town, you meet numerous parties starting at all hours and in every direction , some well , some ill equipped , but all hastening *à la chasse* full of energy and expectation, and eagerly bent on indiscriminate slaughter.

Such is the effect of the revolutions of 1789 and 1830, upon partridge shooting, which is no longer reserved for the exclusive enjoyment of a privileged class , and which , ere another half century rolls over , will scarcely exist as an amusement in this highly cultivated and populous country.

The *chasseur épiciier* usually sets out as soon as he can see his way through the town gates , fancying that he , thereby , secures numerous advantages over his less active neighbours. The portly *rentier* being a person of less calculating , or of more indolent habits , is much less precipitate :

you may see him at , a more convenient hour , turning quietly out of some retired street , in his dark blouse and broad brimmed felt hat , with a newish double barrel carelessly slung over his shoulder , and a sleek well fed , submissive looking pointer at his heels , presenting altogether a rather business-like appearance , and yet it is an unquestionable fact that he usually buys his game from the *braconniers* ; and , on his return , ostentatiously parades them as his own shooting , giving a marvellous account of the performance of his parlour dog , and of the astonishing superiority of his double barrel , and modestly leaving his admiring friends to draw the ready made , cut and dry conclusion , that he is no ordinary sportsman.

The French *chasseurs* are most indefatigable beaters , and frequently travel over the entire ground themselves , seldom allowing their dogs beyond the range of their guns. It is obvious that such a system imposes much additional labour upon all parties concerned , and that a few active and well trained dogs , hunted in a sportsmanlike manner , would beat ten times more ground , find considerably more game , and leave Monsieur nothing to do but to smoke his cigar (at which he is no inconsiderable practitioner) , and to knock down his birds according as he found them.

These , however , are advantages which British sportsmen alone know how to secure , and which must , at all times , produce astonishing effect in this country , more especially as the unlimited extent of the tillage affords the birds such unbounded scope , that nothing short of superior dogs can secure brilliant success.

Some of these *chasseurs* remain in favourite localities where they know that scattered coveys will , sooner or later , arrive , mark them as they come , pick them up in odd birds , and frequently fill their huge *carnassières* in this very sluggish way. Others ramble over the surrounding country, depend upon more active exertions , and succeed equally well ; but the best shooting is usually obtained by some British sportsman who enjoys the invidious reputation of being the crack shot of the town, and maintains it with becoming dignity.

It is sometimes exceedingly difficult to find the remains of a broken covey, scattered in good cover over a tolerably extensive range ; especially when the weather is warm , and the dogs are fatigued after a long beat. These scattered birds being always in a state of great alarm lie perfectly motionless , and emit scarcely any scent , so that the best dogs pass them over, unless they accidentally stumble upon them.

I was once so circumstanced with a brace of dogs quite done up : the birds were scattered over an extensive mountain heath , and after a fruitless search , I sat down without the least expectation of seeing any more of them. It was between three and four o'clock in the afternoon , in still warm weather, and, in something less than half an hour, I heard the shrill *kec-wick* not a hundred yards from where I sat : I took the hint, you may imagine, was kept very busy for the remainder of the evening , and had prime sport.

I can therefore recommend this manœuvre in similar cases with much confidence , and have no doubt it will be found very successful.

Some very fastidious persons think it an unsportsmanlike proceeding ; but, I confess, I see no just ground for the imputation , as I consider it perfectly justifiable under such circumstances to find birds in the best way we can, provided we deal fairly with them when discovered. I shall however leave the question for the decision of those who assume jurisdiction over such matters , simply reserving to myself the right of acting according to my own discretion and taste on all such occasions , which , it must be admitted , is a very modest reservation.

In good cover , such as clover , turnips and

potatoes , it is easy enough to get near birds ; but **they** sometimes take to running before the dogs , **and** , then gain so much upon them , that they are **apt** to rise unexpectedly either out of shot , or at very inconvenient distances.

Those who keep behind their dogs, urging them on, and continually speaking to them , may calculate upon frequently coming in for this species of annoyance. The birds take the hint much quicker than the dogs on these occasions , and steal off with wonderful adroitness. The best course to pursue is to go well ahead of the dogs , and get the birds between you and them, and then advance cautiously and spring them : when so sprung, they often fly right and left , afford the most beautiful shots, separate, and scatter through the adjoining covers where they are easily picked up in single birds.

If however they are found in small patches of clover (or potatoes), and commence running before the dogs, you may do worse than go to the end of the clover (or potatoes), and allow the dogs to trail them down quietly. They generally rise according as they reach the end of the cover , and thus often afford several shots. Even when birds lie well in such cover, which they will always do if it be wet, it is advisable to approach them sideways , or in

front of the dog , and not to go behind him which is , for many reasons , a most objectionable proceeding.

Numerous recipes are given by experienced sportsmen for getting near , and obtaining shots at wild birds ; but no sovereign remedy has ever been suggested : it still remains the difficulty, *par excellence*, in partridge shooting, and is no where more felt than in the heavy and interminable fallows of France during the after season , when the birds become perfectly unapproachable ; this is attributable to two very sufficient causes : the French farmer ploughs up and harrows his land as soon as he removes his crop , and away goes the cover , and the French *chasseurs* are unceasingly hunting them from one fallow to another until they become as wild as widgeons , and both see and hear , and even smell them , (as indeed well they may), at incredible distances.

What remedy can be suggested in such a state of things ?....

My intelligent medical adviser has the happiest knack imaginable of getting rid of inconvenient difficulties ; and how could medical men get on without that inestimable knack , it is in such constant demand. I once complained that I could not digest fish, and begged of him to give me some

recipe to assist in that essential operation , fully expecting that he would suggest the use of some very efficient sauce , or order them to be cooked



in some particular manner ; but he did neither the one nor the other. He quaintly replied : *Il n'y a rien de plus simple ; ne les mangez pas.*

Now I much fear I am driven to the necessity of adopting his mode of proceeding, as the fact is that the admission must be made , there is no effectual remedy , none upon which the least reliance can be placed: if however, experiments must be made, not knowing better , I recommend the following :

put them up ; mark them , and then approach the spot , without a dog , in a sloping direction , as if you meant to pass them by , and take care , in doing so , to have the wind (and the more the better) full in your face. If any undulation in the surface of the ground affords you the means of concealing your approach , you should of course avail yourself of it (I need not tell you that partridges never see anything through a hill) ; but be quick , a slow deliberate pace is always the most alarming to birds. They may thus allow you to get within shot of them before they rise ; if they do , your object is accomplished ; if not , mark them , and begin again , and you may go on until you are utterly disgusted and heartily sick of it. I know of no other course in this open country : but remember your chance of success mainly depends upon your having the wind full in your face , and your not taking out a flashy handkerchief to wipe the tears from your eyes , which giddy young sportsmen occasionally do and spring the covey at once.

For my own part , whenever I find partridges so wild as to require the adoption of such contrivances to get near them , my remedy is to back out of the concern , and return home , as nothing short of superior partridge shooting could induce me to

trudge over those heavy fallows even twenty years ago, when I found it much easier to walk over ploughed fields, I presume, from some alteration in the mode of ploughing them which may not perhaps be otherwise discoverable.

If any very scientific person wishes to try the effect of a boisterous day, *after a heavy fall of rain*, when he may be certain of having the additional comfort of carrying half a stone weight of sticky clay on each foot, I have no doubt he will get shots, and as little that he will earn them. In such cases, he should always approach the birds across the furrows, (if any), and not down along them, and make as little noise as possible.

It would be an idle affectation of knowledge to attempt to point out those districts in which the best partridge shooting may be obtained in the different departments of France, as partridges are found in abundance in almost every department, and are scattered over the entire surface of the country; and there is no difficulty in obtaining sufficient information as to the best localities wherever a sportsman may happen to be. It may however be useful to give my reader a few general hints on the subject: *Imprimis*; he need not expect to have much sport, though he may often find game, in the vicinity of large towns where there

are always so many sportsmen continually hunting them, that the birds generally rise at long distances and fly out of sight : he should therefore retire into the rural districts , and put up at some small town , such as Fauquembergue , Fruges , Pernes or Th rouanne, which lie in the very best partridge districts in the Pas-de-Calais ; or at some convenient village where he finds abundance of game. The hilly districts will always be found preferable to the low flat country along the coast , where the partridge shooting is bad , and where the country is usually so intersected by drains , that there is much difficulty , and considerable loss of time , in getting through it. Hence the partridge shooting about Calais, Gravelines and Dunkerque is miserably bad.

There is no sort of difficulty in obtaining comfortable accommodation in the small towns and villages throughout France, and sportsmen are not constrained to waste their time , or their money , in hasty and vexations journeys backwards and forwards from some great town to such shooting locality as they may select , for want of accommodation on the spot : they will always find comfortable fare , a clean bed , an excellent bottle of wine , and have plenty of game for their supper.

Partridges pair in the month of March when the

cocks fight with great desperation. The hens uniformly witness the conflict , and reward the victorious champion : but if any accident deprives her of him , she immediately accepts of his vanquished antagonist.

Game keepers are so well aware of this amiable weakness that , whenever they have any supernumerary cocks in their preserves , they count them and kill as many without reference to their being the paired or unpaired birds. . Killing these supernumerary cocks is a most important affair, as they search for the nests , and , if they find them , destroy the eggs , perhaps for revenge.

Partridges uniformly call , for a few minutes (to collect their scattered party) before they take their accustomed flight from the feeding ground to the cover , where they pass the night , or from the cover to the feeding ground the following morning. Poachers , being well aware of their habits , lurk about suspected localities until they hear them *call* and having thus discovered their haunts , generally take the entire covey at a haul (frequently by night) in their destructive nets.

Monsieur Elzéar Blaze in his very interesting work , in which he gives invaluable instructions to young sportsmen , recommends the following curious , and (he assures us) most effectual method

of preventing partridges being taken by these nightly marauders. As soon as the crops are removed, net them *at night*, and after retaining them for four and twenty hours in a proper place, judiciously arranged for their reception, let them out the following night, in their old haunts, where they become so wary and watchful, that they cannot be again captured by the most expert hands.*

The partridge makes a simple nest in which she lays from 12 to 20 eggs in the latter end of April, or the beginning of May. The period of incubation is about three weeks. When the birds come out, they remain 36 hours in the nest without food, and then follow the hen from place to place. The young birds get the horseshoe on their breasts in about three months, and are generally able to fly at S' John's day; at least so says the proverb, *à la saint Jean, perdreau volant*.

Partridges sometimes make choice of injudicious places for their nests, and build them in crops that come to maturity before their birds are out: in such cases, when the crops are cut, the eggs are destroyed. The hen, on these occasions, usually makes a new nest, but seldom succeeds in rearing her second clutch in time for the

* *Le Chasseur au chien d'arrêt*, par ELIZÉE BLAZE, p. 443.

shooting season , when , being too weak, they are snapped up by greedy dogs, trampled in the clover, or shot by dandy sportsmen who are delighted to find something they can kill.

The male partridge is known by his *call* which is louder and more lingering than that of the hen ; by his spurs and the sign of the horse shoe on his breast. The young birds are distinguished from the old ones by the last feather in the wing being pointed instead of being rounded , and by the light colour of the feet.

Except in the breeding season , partridges remain in coveys composed of the old couples , and the young birds and any straggling birds that may join them from broken coveys : they frequent cultivated grounds and vineyards , and seldom enter woods, unless when much hunted or frightened by birds of prey , and they scarcely ever forsake the neighbourhood of the place in which they were bred.

La Perdrix rouge.

This is a superb bird and is much larger than the common gray partridge : like them they assemble in coveys at the commencement of the season , but are not , by any means , so social , and

are much easier scattered. When on the ground they separate more from each other, are apt to rise in single birds and to fly in different directions, and when scattered seldom unite for a considerable time afterwards. Towards the latter end of the season, they rise in a perpendicular manner and then shoot off (like the pheasant), with the utmost rapidity. Indeed killing them, under such circumstances, is considered the criterion of first rate performance.

They generally stand a dog very well after being two or three times flushed, and when after running some distance, they then crouch before a dog; they lie like stones.

They ramble more than the gray partridges, and sometimes quit a neighbourhood without any assignable cause, and never return to it. They do not agree well with the other birds, and their quarrels may perhaps frequently drive them from the neighbourhood. They prefer woody and mountainous districts to an open country, and frequently perch upon trees, but never remain long upon them.

They breed like the common partridges, but are seldom met in such strong coveys, and when the hen begins to hatch, the cock forsakes her, and pays no further attention to the proceedings.

They are very beautiful birds , but are not considered so good for the table as the gray partridge, not having so delicate a flavour. They, however, bring a higher price in the market in consequence of their additional size and splendid appearance.

They are sometimes seen in the markets, at Lille and S'-Omer , but are plentiful in the southern , eastern and western departments , and at Amiens , and Paris. They are very abundant in Britany.

La Bartavelle.

This is the largest partridge known, and is fully twice the size of the gray partridge : it much resembles the red partridge, but its *call* is more continuous and of a peculiarly monotonous tone: hence its name from *bartaveou* which , in Languedoc signifies the noise of a mill. This bird is wilder than the red partridge. It frequents mountainous and woody countries ; and , as it takes very long flights , it is a most laborious and fatiguing pursuit to follow them. They are found in the mountainous districts of Herault , Aude , Cantal , Puy-de-Dôme , Haute-Loire and Ardèche and in the Pyrenées and the Alps. They are also very abundant in Italy , and in the Mediterranean Islands.

The bartavelle is the greek partridge.



CHAPTER III.

Quails—Afford excellent sport—Very active dogs necessary for quail shooting—Birds of passage in France—Come from Africa in the month of May, and return in September—Politely received by the public authorities, under Charles the 4th—Natural history, etc.

This interesting and beautiful little bird affords excellent sport : they are very abundant in the southern and western departments of France, and are more or less scattered over the entire country, but are not numerous in the northern districts.

Whoever finds a bevy of quails, and has an active close beating well nosed dog, may calculate, with great certainty, upon filling his bag. They

neither rise together nor startle the sportsman like partridges , but get up quietly one after another , or, at most , in pairs , make very little noise, fly in an undeviating straight line , and seldom go any great distance at a flight.

Some sportsmen consider the quail a rather difficult mark : They unquestionably move at a rapid pace, but in such an even and regular course that those who are accustomed to their peculiar mode of flight , seldom miss them , and those who are not , contrive to do so occasionally. They however always lie so well , and get up so near sportsmen, that there is no hurry or confusion and time enough for the slowest shots, and they always appeared to me (though I have not had much quail shooting , for they are very rare where I received the best part of my shooting education) , a very easy shot, even next to that unmissable gentleman, the corncrake.

The quail is a bird of passage in France : it comes here to breed , and only remains from May to September. On their first arrival, they go into the green wheat which , then , affords them ample cover , and into the early meadows , from which circumstance they are then called *cailles vertes*. They afterwards go into the buck wheat , hemp and clover crops , and become as fat as ortolans ,

when they deservedly acquire the name of *cailles grasses* and would be deemed presentable to any corporation in Christendom.

In the month of May they are exceedingly abundant on the coast of the Mediterranean where they arrive from Africa in vast numbers, and are frequently so fatigued on their passage, that they drop into the water before they can reach the land. In this helpless condition they stretch out their little wings to catch the breeze, and are thus wafted to the shore. Crowds of people watch their arrival, and, wading into the water, catch them by thousands. Under Charles the 10th this was prohibited, and the *préfets* of the several departments along the coast sent the *gendarmes*, *gardes-champêtres* and police to protect them on their arrival. This polite attention has, however, since the revolution of 1830, been withdrawn, and they are consequently not so numerous as theretofore, which is much to be regretted.

It is said by some writers that, when fatigued and unable to continue their flight, they settle on the rigging of ships, and occasionally collect in such numbers that they overturn and sink them.*

* *Les amusements de la campagne*, par le sieur LIEUX, Paris, 1709, l. 4 p. 29.

This certainly is rather incredible , and , if satisfactorily vouched would , in all likelihood , give rise to a new species of marine insurance ; but I think we may relieve our enterprising merchants from all anxiety on that score.

The quail is known all over Europe : Their regular annual migration into Asia and Africa is exceedingly curious and very unaccountable. They accomplish their object with much system. They quit the northern districts in the month of August , and approach the Mediterranean coast where they collect in great numbers in the month of September, when they take their departure.

They have been occasionally found , during the winter and the early part of the spring , in old walls and hollow trees in a torpid state , but few remain in France after September.

They are very handsome birds ; the head of the male is mottled with black and reddish colours , with three beautiful longitudinal white streaks , one on the top of the head , and the other two on its sides passing above the eyes. The throat is red and has some small streaks of a reddish brown upon it , and the neck and back are of a mixture of black, red, and gray. The female has its neck white and its breast whitish and mottled with roundish black spots.

Quails very much resemble the common partridge in their habits : they form their nest and bring out their birds in the same manner. They also prefer cultivated fields to mountainous districts , or woods , which they never enter from choice. On their arrival in France they pair , and generally lay from 12 to 18 eggs ; when the female begins to hatch , the male deserts her.

Quails are scattered over the country while they remain in France , and are occasionally found by most sportsmen in partridge shooting ; they are great ramblers , and seldom remain long in any particular locality. Many sportsmen dislike meeting them as they are apt to make young dogs puzzle and poke about too much ; but they afford excellent sport , are very superior birds for the table , and are as soon cooked as an egg.





CHAPTER IV.

Rails—Are birds of passage in France—Come in large Flocks with the quails—A God-send to bad shots—A curious mode of fertilizing soil exhausted by tillage—Natural history of rails—Different sorts—Architectural curiosities.

These rails are birds of passage in France : they come in vast numbers along with the quails from Africa , and are usually found in the same localities ; hence the *râle de génét* is also called the king of the quails. When they reach France they proceed into the interior of the country in large flocks travelling by night , and resting by day in any convenient cover they chance to meet *en route*. And when they find a suitable locality, they scatter

over the country; get into the meadows and marshy grounds, and flock no more. They then pair and breed, and afterwards return to Africa with the quails.

Rails are exceedingly unwilling to fly, and depend more on their legs than upon their wings for protection: hence, when they get into any tolerable cover, it is next to impossible to spring them; and, when sprung, they seem to fly with much difficulty, stretching out their necks and hanging their legs in a vertical position as if they were wounded, notwithstanding which they have very large wings in proportion to the size and weight of their bodies.

They present a mark that scarcely any sportsman can miss, on which account, most beginners like to meet with them. *C'est le pont aux ânes du métier.*

I recollect when I considered them quite a God-send, as I was certain of knocking them down before I could calculate with much certainty on touching a snipe or a woodcock.

It requires an exceedingly active dog to spring them, as they seldom stand an instant, and run with such wonderful celerity through the grass without apparently moving it, that a cautious dog has no chance of overtaking them, and a sports-

man can form no idea of the direction they have taken.

Whenever a sportsman falls in with a number of rails in France, he should pursue them and give them no quarter ; for , beyond all question , they will proceed on their journey the following night , and he need never expect to see them again. They keep on the wing the entire night , and make very long journeys.

When the meadows are cut , the rails go into the buck wheat and oat crops ; and , later in the season , they take refuge in the young copses in waste lands , and in the fields of broom so common in some parts of France , particularly in Britany , where the farmers , when the land is exhausted , sow broom with the last crop they cultivate ; and , after allowing it to gain some strength , turn in their cattle and treat it as pasture for a few years , until they consider that the land has recovered its fertility : they then root it up , burn the roots and branches , manure the soil with the ashes and commence a new course of tillage. This is a curious expedient , and shows how backward they are in the science of agriculture. It would be rather difficult to persuade an English farmer to try such an experiment.

The female rail makes her simple nest on the

ground in meadow land , or in the side of a drain. She lays from eight to ten eggs of a brownish yellow colour, with reddish spots : they are somewhat larger than those of the quail. The young birds present a very curious appearance : they are black and covered with down (like young ducks), and follow her through the grass : they live upon insects and the seeds of various grasses and plants and all sorts of grain , and become exceedingly fat and high flavoured in the after season.

They are greatly esteemed by some of our best judges who consider them much superior to partridges or quails , of which , indeed , there can be no question ; but as they are good for nothing until September and October , and are generally shot in the early part of the season , many persons are ignorant of the superiority of the rail , when in good condition.

The *rále d'eau*, *rále baillon* and *la marouette* are also birds of passage, differing something in plumage and size, but strongly resembling each other in their habits.

They frequent marshy grounds and stagnant pools.

They arrive in France in March and April , and leave it in the winter season : they are all quite as unwilling to fly as the *rále de génét* ; and when

hard pressed , they sometimes plunge into the water , and dive , like a wounded duck , to evade a dog , and they run on the aquatic weeds like sylphs, or water fairies which you must have seen.

The nest formed by the *marouette* deserves notice as an architectural curiosity : it is built with bits of dry reeds interwoven with each other and fastened together in a most ingenious manner : the interior is decorated with moss, hair, feathers and the down of plants , and it is placed upon the surface of the water , and attached to a reed or bull rush so that it rises and falls with the flood.

When we reflect that the artist had neither hands, nor tools of any sort to accomplish his work , and that we, who have both, and the model before us, can scarcely imitate it, we cannot contemplate this extraordinary production without admiration and wonder ; more especially when we consider the precarious position in which it is placed , and the beautiful and ingenious device by which it is preserved from destruction. I know of nothing to compare it to , but the nest of the golden wren , which is always suspended in the air under the branch to which it is attached , and which is of the most delicate and beautiful structure.





CHAPTER V.

Woodcocks—The French mode of shooting them—How to beat for, and shoot them in cover—Are excellent and active fliers—Light heavily and run like rails—How to search for them when shot—Great caution necessary to avoid accidents in cock shooting—Ludicrous accident—Putting a marker up a tree impracticable—How to get woodcocks near preserves—Natural history and habits—Several sorts of woodcocks.

Though several woodcocks remain the entire year in the mountainous districts of France, the main supply is drawn from the Alps and the Pyrenees where they breed in vast numbers.

When the severe winter frosts close up their favourite haunts and feeding places, they descend into the low country, and scatter through the forests, woods, and small covers, where they remain until spring, and then return to their mountain homes.

While thus sojourning in the low country, they afford considerable amusement to shooting sportsmen, many of whom rent forests and woods for the purpose of cock-shooting.

The French usually employ dogs in this sport, and furnish them with bells, that they may know whereabouts they are and when they find game: when the dog stops, the music ceases, and hence they can often determine where the bird lies, and the best mode of obtaining a fair shot when it rises.

Some sportsmen are wonderfully expert at shooting birds in thick covers, and prefer walking with the beaters, or starting them for themselves, to remaining outside in expectation of a shot.

When the cover consists of grown trees moderately thinned out for timber, with underwood and briers through them, the best course is to beat for them one's self, or to have a single beater walking quietly through the cover, making very little noise, but searching closely in all likely places, and to *keep a little in advance of him*: by proceeding thus

and keeping the ground he beats , as much under command as possible ; many very fair shots may be obtained provided they be quickly taken. There must be no poking for an aim on these occasions ; a slow shot had much better take his chance outside.

Woodcocks, unless they have been much hunted , usually lie well before a dog , and afford a sportsman ample time to move into the best position to command their flight. When flushed, they rise with much noise, and in an awkward fluttering manner , as if they were greatly incommoded by the brambles and branches about them : but they are no sooner clear of these obstructions and well upon the wing , than they dart off with considerable speed , and often present rather difficult shots , especially when only occasionally seen in their passage through trees.

When a cock is flying horizontally through trees, and is only now and again visible in his passage through open spaces , the best mode of dealing with him is to fix upon some opening , a little in advance of him , through which he must immediately pass ; raise your gun to the line of his flight and fire the instant he appears in it : this will be found a most successful method , if fairly tried.

When once well on the wing, and perfect master

of its flight , a woodcock is an active and expert flier. I have known them (when flint guns were in vogue), dip on seeing the flash of the pan , and escape untouched from excellent shots.

Woodcocks light so heavily that they sometimes appear to fling themselves upon the ground , and the moment they light, they run off with the greatest celerity, especially in drains , hedges and rows of young trees. In such cases it is advisable either to keep well in advance of the beaters , or else to get well in advance of the place marked, and remain stationary until the beaters put them up , when they usually rise much nearer than we expect , or fly within a few yards of us , before they turn off , and afford the fairest shots imaginable.

No bird presents a more beautiful shot than a woodcock : when flushed in heath or in ferns , in the open country , they lie so well , fly so evenly and present such a splendid mark : missing them is then quite out of the question , and the least touch brings them down.

The French sometimes employ beaters to start the birds for them , and then they proceed very much as we do in such cases; but, often, make too much noise , which is a great fault in cock shooting.

The woodcock is a very timid bird, and if alarmed

and put on its guard, is very apt to *steal off* before the beaters come up , in which case there is little chance of getting near it. Beaters should therefore never be allowed to make any *unnecessary noise* in their progress : they should be armed with sticks, walk quietly through the planting , and strike the brambles and thick cover in all suspected places, and merely cry *mark* when a bird rises and takes the direction of a shooter ; for , if a cock flies off in a direction where no shot can be had at him , it is much better to allow him to go off quietly and , as it were , unnoticed.

In thus beating a cover it is advisable to keep a little in advance of the beaters : by so doing the birds come out at nice distances , and afford fair shots. When narrow skirting plantations are thus beaten , nothing can exceed the beauty of the shooting.

It is a curious fact that most sporting dogs have an unaccountable antipathy to the woodcock , and seldom fetch it willingly. When there is any hitch about finding a dead bird , the best way is to wave ceremony, and step for it yourself ; more especially as they sometimes stick in the branches of trees in falling, and such places should always be carefully examined , when a bird is known to have dropped and cannot be found

I recollect assisting two very clever beaters who were engaged for nearly an hour in searching for a cock ; and we were on the point of giving it up as fruitless , when he was accidentally discovered. His head and neck were seen hanging through the branch of a spruce fir tree , several feet from the ground , and three or four yards out of the direction in which he appeared to have fallen.

Persons , who shoot in thick covers , cannot exercise too much caution in guarding against those fatal accidents which so frequently occur in such localities. The most effectual arrangement is always to hold a gun in such a position that , if accidentally discharged, it can do no mischief : this soon becomes habitual and precludes the possibility of any disaster , and , at the same time, leaves the sportsman at liberty to carry his gun in full cock when he pleases. There is no greater fallacy than depending upon constantly cocking and uncocking a gun by way of guarding against accidents : in fact nothing can be more dangerous than the habit of constantly doing so.

The French are, in general, more systematically cautious in these respects than we are. When they enter a cover they proceed with great regularity , quite *en militaire* ; keeping in line and never pointing their guns towards each other ; while , on

the contrary , some of our young sportsmen hurry on as if they were in reality running a race , or playing at “ devil take the hindmost . ”

I shall never forget an instance I once witnessed of this ludicrous impetuosity : Two young gentlemen were upon the amiable dodge of trying for the first shot at a covey of partridges lying before the dogs , in a field of mangel wurzel : they had their guns in full cock , and were hastening with long strides across the ridges , when one of them was tripped up and flung upon his face , and , in his fall plunged his gun a couple of feet deep into the soft earth. Had it gone off, he might have been killed, as the gun would in all probability have gone to pieces in such a position.

The other had all the shooting to himself ; and , nevertheless , fired both barrels into the covey before they were ten yards from him , of course , without touching a feather : he was however pretty successful on the whole , as he contrived to shoot one of the dogs.

Such is always the result of over anxiety in shooting ; the dogs are in much more danger than the birds.

Some writers recommend putting a marker up a tree to watch the flight of such birds as escape , and to report where they pitch ; but , I confess , I

never yet saw a tree that would answer the purpose, and cannot help thinking it a most impracticable suggestion.

If you are shooting in a valley, it may be advisable to post an intelligent marker on an adjoining hill, provided you can find one competent to discharge the duty with sufficient expertness and accuracy to attain your object : but it may be easier to find the woodcock than such a marker at the moment.

The French forests and woods are sometimes so extensive and so impenetrable, that there is no possibility of shooting the woodcocks in them. In such cases they can be only obtained by strata-gem founded upon an acquaintance with their habits.

The woodcock quits the cover at the dusk of the evening, goes into the snipe haunts and marshes in the neighbourhood, or to springs or such like localities, and spends the night on the feed. It returns in the morning, just before day break to the cover where it spends the day. Before it returns into the cover, it uniformly pays a visit to some pond, spring or rivulet where it washes its feet and bill, and makes its *toilette* for the day : this is never neglected, and it is only necessary to find out these places (which is easily done by ob-

serving their tracks and other marks they usually leave of a very conspicuous character) , and to attend there , just before day break to obtain several nice shots.

It is advisable to fire at them upon the wing ; they fly slowly , rather like bats than birds , and are easily shot after a little practice , but cannot be seen on the ground.

It is also better not to pick them up at the moment , as they are very apt to come in rapid succession , and the time for shooting them in this way is of short duration.

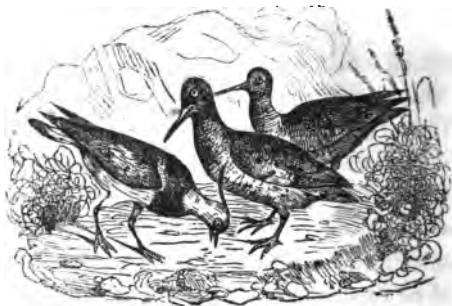
Woodcocks are found in great numbers in the forests and woods in those departments connected with the Pyrenees, and along the western coast of France ; also in Britany and Normandy. They are also scattered throughout the whole country , and are very abundant in favourable seasons. There is some good cock shooting in the Pas-de-Calais , about Guines and Hesdin, and they are occasionally found in the Garennes , along the coast between Boulogne and Montreuil which may be rented by sportsmen for the season on very reasonable terms.

Woodcocks breed in the Alps , in the Pyrenees , in Switzerland , Savoy , and in the mountainous departments of Contal and the Puy-de-Dôme. They make their nests upon the ground , in a simple

inartificial manner , and lay 4 or 5 eggs of an oblong shape , and of a reddish colour, shaded with black, and about the size of a pigeon's egg. When the birds come out, they run like young corncrakes.

There are several varieties of the woodcock known in France , some of which are extremely beautiful birds ; but they are rarely met with , and would be exceedingly well worth stuffing and preserving when shot : the following may be enumerated : *la bécasse ordinaire*, or common woodcock ; *la grosse bécasse*, the large woodcock which is fully a third larger than the common bird , and of a darker colour ; *la petite bécasse* , which is something smaller than the common bird , has a larger bill , and blue legs ; *la bécasse blanche* , which is white, with the bill and feet yellow ; *la bécasse rousse* , of a watered red colour on a dark red ground ; *la bécasse Isabelle*, of a light yellow colour ; *la bécasse à tête rousse* , with the body whitish , the wings brown and the head reddish ; *la bécasse aux ailes blanches* , with white wings and otherwise resembling the common bird. They have remarkably fine eyes , and are very quick sighted : they feed on worms and insects , and pass the night on the feed , as already mentioned.





CHAPTER VI.

Snipes—Are birds of passage in France—How French snipe shooters proceed—Marais boots necessary—Snipe shooting in Ireland—A curious circumstance and a curious explanation—Waiting for snipes to stop twisting, an extraordinary idea—How to deal with them—Localities where snipes are found in France—Battue aux hécaissines, a funny proceeding—Natural history of snipes—Different sorts of—A gentleman and his jack-snipe.

Snipes are birds of passage in France. They arrive in the autumn and throughout the winter months in large flocks, and scatter over the fens, marshy bottoms and low meadow lands, where

they are killed in vast numbers both by the French and English snipe shooters, and they generally disappear in severe frosts.

In beating these fens and snipe haunts the French sportsmen employ dogs both to set, and fetch the birds when shot : they wear huge *marais* boots,* which come up above their knees and keep them perfectly dry, even when walking through water, which is often unavoidable in these localities.

All snipe shooters are aware that to have brilliant sport, they must have suitable weather : a darkish lowering day, with rather a fresh breeze, will be found most favourable for this amusement. The birds lie well in such weather, and as they uniformly fly against the wind (when there is any worth estimating), it is only necessary to beat down the wind to obtain beautiful cross shots. Besides being retarded in their progress, their flight is steadier and slower than in calm weather.

On these occasions all snipe shooters recommend firing a little in advance of the birds, more or less according to circumstances ; but no fixed rule can be laid down to regulate the extent of this allowance, the amount of which depends on so many

* M. Paternelle, 59, rue du Damier, St-Omer, makes excellent *marais* boots at about 50 francs per pair.

and such varying circumstances ; the rate at which the bird is moving , the direction of its flight , its distance, the time gained by detonating guns, and by the expertness of the artist , all enter into the calculation. The being able to hit off this allowance , and to judge correctly and promptly of distances, are matters of serious moment in shooting , and have perhaps more to do with first rate performance than is generally supposed.

The French snipe haunts in the vicinity of large towns are too much beaten to afford any opportunity of trying colonel Hawker's advice : " First, to go down wind, and walk up the wild birds, and then to let go an old pointer and return up wind to find the lazy ones." Which, however, is a most valuable suggestion , and of which I have often availed myself in , perhaps , the best snipe haunts in Europe * where the supply of game does not depend upon occasional flights of birds , but continues uniform and plentiful throughout the entire season. In these haunts , dogs are seldom used , and would do more harm than good , the great difficulty being to avoid putting them up too fast : we therefore usually walk them up, proceeding in the quietest and most cautious manner possible.

* In Ireland.

This, however, is not the case when birds are scattered over large bogs or extensive rushy districts, or driven into the upland by floods : in such localities, from the great extent of ground to be beaten, dogs are not only useful, but quite indispensable.

Most snipe shooters are aware that birds are *often* sprung out of the recent tracks of the beater when he returns upon the beaten ground : but no attempt, that I am aware of, has ever been made to account for this very singular occurrence. I have been assured by an old sportsman, who is full of curious and interesting information on such topics, that he, several times, saw snipes running from the unbeaten into the beaten ground, which he ascribes to their searching for some particular sort of food rendered perhaps more available by the trampling of the beater over the spongy surface, of which trampling, he considers, they have a peculiarly quick perception.

I have never seen snipes upon the ground, except on springs, or by the sides of rivulets, in severe frost, and can therefore say nothing in corroboration of this singular theory, but think it deserves notice.

Some sportsmen consider snipe shooting exceedingly difficult, and give various directions on the

subject. Amongst those, colonel Hawker desires us to remain perfectly unconcerned till they have done *twisting*, and then bring up the gun, and fire.

Nobody can feel greater respect for colonel Hawker's opinions than I do : at the same time I must confess that I think this *twisting*, as it is called, deserves no such consideration, and that no sportsman should pay the least attention to the circumstance. A slow poking shot, who deliberately puts up his gun, and then endeavours to cover his bird, and makes half a dozen efforts to do so before he can muster courage enough to pull the trigger, may find these evolutions rather embarrassing; but, as no snipe can twist itself out of the range of a charge of shot, some better system, than waiting until it stops twisting, must be adopted : *the difficulty should be dealt with, and not set up as insurmountable.*

Now, before we consider the best mode of dealing with this difficulty, it is desirable to notice the extreme importance (on such occasions particularly), of firing *at proper distances*, and the effect of so doing.

Those who take the trouble of comparing the manner in which their guns deliver the charge at from 20 to 40 yards, will find a particular distance at which the charge is evenly distributed over the

largest circle it can so cover , and will see that a bird , at that distance , cannot fly through the shot untouched , and therefore cannot escape any where within the circle , i. e. at from a foot to 18 inches , perhaps more , on either side of its centre : while , on the contrary , at shorter distances , the diameter of the circle will be proportionally diminished , and at longer distances the shot will be proportionally scattered , until a bird may fly through it in a dozen ways without being touched. Another elementary consideration seldom sufficiently attended to , is having a gun properly stocked so that it may fall into its true position without any awkward exertion : on this the bringing up of the barrels *evenly* to the eye , mainly depends. The general defect is that the breeches are left below the line of vision , and then the charge passes above the mark.

I once had a gun newly stocked , and found that my birds came down in a slovenly and wounded condition , as if they only got rambling grains. I concluded that the gun had lost its shooting , and took it to Mr Rigby , the deservedly eminent Dublin gunsmith , who is himself an excellent shot , and mentioned my suspicion on the subject : but he at once decided that the defect was in the stock , and his opinion proved correct , for a slight

alteration set all right : from which circumstance it may be seen how much depends on *having one's measure taken for a gun*.

Now , having said so much on these two very important elementary points , because they have a direct bearing upon the mode of proceeding which I am about to recommend , I trust I may be permitted, without presumption, to advise my readers, instead of waiting for snipes to leave off twisting , (which they are not likely to do to accommodate any body), or troubling themselves about obtaining easy shots, to try the following simple method, by which I have , for many years , contrived to bag between two and three hundred brace of snipes each season.

The moment a bird rises , fix your eye upon it and follow it until it nearly reaches the distance at which you know your gun is most efficient ; then bring up your gun , throwing the whole length of the barrels from the breeches to the sight into the line of vision already formed between you and the bird , and the moment the gun is in its place , fire : there is no difficulty in attaining sufficient expertness in thus dealing with game. The difficult point is to determine the true distance at which the bird should be fired at , with sufficient promptitude , and the general mistake is firing too soon:

Whenever I hear the caution against firing at twisting snipes, it reminds me of the directions so often given to swallow-shooters, to fire at them just on the turn, when they usually balance themselves for a second in the air, and are as easily shot as if they were perched upon a tree.

But that is a trick upon swallow shooting, and quite unworthy of the name: a trick on snipe shooting is not so easily accomplished.

Snipes are occasionally found in great abundance in the extensive fens and marshes throughout France; particularly in the north of France and in Britany, and in those departments which border on the Pyrenees where the snipe shooting is very superior: in the Pas-de-Calais they are occasionally found in great abundance; in the fens of Clairmarais, in the vicinity of S'-Omer; in the low marshy grounds about Guines; and at Montreuil where there is most excellent snipe shooting. There is also very fine snipe shooting in the fens, near Nantes.

Snipes are indeed scattered over the entire country, and the nature of their haunts is so well known, that no sportsman can ever have any difficulty in ascertaining where they are to be had, in whatever department he may be.

When large flocks of snipes are known to have arrived in the fens and marshes of Clairmarais, the

S'-Omer *chasseurs* make the most ludicrous efforts to outstrip their brethren and be the first amongst them.

Nobody, without having seen these *battues aux bécassines*, could believe, that such a party could be any where collected for such a purpose. These exquisitely funny *chasseurs* proceed to some favourite haunt, where they muster before they have sufficient light to distinguish one another, and if you chanced to see them platooned under the willow trees, at the first dawn of day, you certainly never could suppose that they were merely on a snipe shooting excursion. There they stand with



their huge *carnassières* (full large enough to contain half a dozen wild geese with the greatest imaginable comfort) on their backs, and a set of shivering half starved curs ready to fetch anything they can grab to their greedy and impatient

masters, at their heels.

They no sooner obtain an indistinct view of the *marais*, than away they trudge down the sloughs, and puddles in their great unwieldy *marais* boots; and why people should incumber themselves with

such boots , who never wear stockings , is more than I can comprehend or explain : but no matter : they wear the boots and they do not wear the stockings , and away they go with cigars in their filthy mouths , puffing out an infinity of smoke , thick and dirty like themselves , as they advance in parties of from six to a dozen. Up gets a snipe unconscious that his short visit could have caused such an insurrectionary movement : but he is soon undeceived ; a hot fire is at once opened upon him, and a couple of pound of snipe shot sent whistling about his ears ; bang , bang , bang , go the *chasseurs aux bécassines* as the poor terrified snipe rises higher, and higher , and quits for ever the truly savage scene. They re-charge and advance anew ; up gets another ; away they go, bang, bang, bang. Some unlucky rambling grain tips the terrified fugitive in the pinion, and down it tumbles into the sedge which it had just so hastily left.

The scene that then follows baffles all description : *Il est touché , mon Dieu ! il est touché ; apporte , apporte* , is shouted forth by the whole party. Away go the curs to fetch the prize ; and , as the right of property turns entirely upon the fact of possession , each urges his dog as they eagerly rummage the deep sedge. At length one finds it, another snatches it up, a third gets it by the head,

a fourth by the wing, a fifth by the leg and thus it is soon torn to pieces and divided amongst the several claimants by their faithful representatives.

Such is the system to which these fly-by-night *chasseurs aux bécassines* have reduced the noble art of snipe shooting : but you must not imagine , gentle reader , that such are the sportsmen of France ; by no means. These are the young *chasseurs* , *épiciers* , *cordonniers* , *ferblantiers* , *chandeliers* et *ramoneurs* of her populous towns spending a few hours à *la chasse aux bécassines*.

It is extraordinary that snipes are found in almost every part of the world. Captain Cook found them in Asia and America. Don Antonio de Cordova speaks of them on the coast of Patagonia and in the Falkland Islands , and M^c Carthy tells us they are found in Van Diemen's land.

They sometimes breed in France , and I have occasionally seen their nests in Ireland. They lay four or five eggs of a light green colour , mottled with brown and pale gray spots.

There are three sorts of snipes , which differ materially in size, plumage, and habits , *la bécassine ordinaire* , the common snipe ; *la grosse bécassine* the solitary snipe ; and *la petite bécassine* , the jacksnipe.

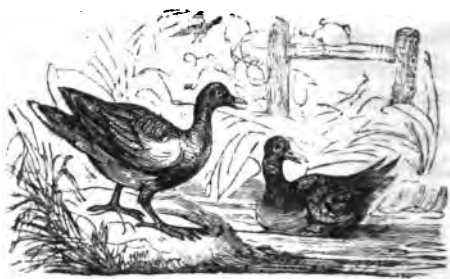
The solitary snipe is fully twice the size of the

common bird : it is well known in Picardy, where it is found from August to November ; and in Provence , where it is found in March and April , and also in September and October. It frequents the marais , and delights in nice clear streams : it does not lie well before a dog but usually runs like a rail.

Jacksnipes are well known to all sportsmen: they are usually met with in odd birds , or at most in pairs ; and are occasionally found in all snipe haunts. They are about the size of a lark ; and sometimes lie so closely that it is most difficult to flush them ; and , when flushed , they fly in a zigzag way very like bats , and present rather a difficult shot for deliberate aim takers who are very apt to miss them.

They are very beautiful birds , having various lively tints in their plumage , and are considered the highest flavoured snipe we have.

I knew a gentleman of that deliberate aim taking class who had a jacksnipe , in about an acre of sedgy bottom at the extremity of his lawn , at which he fired above 200 shots in the course of a season, and expressed the deepest regret at having, one day, accidentally killed it. It was unquestionably a most unfortunate accident ; and I think it affected him so much that he gave up shooting from thenceforth.



CHAPTER VII.

Wild-ducks — Extraordinary supply of in France — Whence derived—The marais districts or french fens , described — The finest vegetable gardens in Europe — Boats necessary for marais shooting — How french duck shooters proceed — A curiously arranged pond—An extraordinary shot on the coast of Hampshire by Col Hawker.—Duck shooting on the pier of Dunkerque.

The prodigious number , and endless variety , of ducks that pour into France , during the winter months , from the northern boundaries of Europe, is perfectly astonishing. To account for such an unlimited supply , it is only necessary to take a

glance at the inexhaustable sources from whence it is drawn.

All voyagers speak with amazement of the extraordinary quantity of water-fowl on the northern coasts of Europe. Regnard , in his *Voyage en Laponie* , informs us that he found the rivers and lakes in Lapland literally covered with ducks, geese and swans ; and that he experienced no difficulty in procuring sufficient to maintain his entire crew without going out of his course to obtain them.

Jacques Arago , in his *Promenade autour du monde*, also informs us that , but for the extraordinary abundance of the wild-ducks , the crew of the *Uranie* must have perished. Such then are the sources from whence this wonderful supply is annually drawn.

Chateaubriand , in his *Génie du Christianisme*, considers the arrival of the ducks, at a period when the land is stripped of its produce , and unproductive, as a special provision for the support of mankind.

It may have been some such consideration, that induced the clergy of France to allow their faithful flocks the privilege of eating widgeon , and teal , upon their days of abstinence: a comfortable indulgence which they , at present, enjoy in France, and perhaps in no other roman catholic country.

These valuable birds reach the coast of France in large flocks during the winter season , and in the early part of spring ; and scatter over the extensive fens and marshes in the north of France , in Normandy, and in Britany , where the duck-shooters kill them in such numbers that , after supplying the neighbouring markets, they are sent in enormous quantities both to London and Paris.*

Before we proceed to consider how the huttier, or fen duck-shooter , conducts his business , we must take a cursory glance at these fens and marshes , which deserve particular notice , and are frequently visited as objects of curiosity by persons who feel no interest in wild-ducks, at least until they

* Persons who wish to purchase wild-ducks in the French markets , should be very particular in examining them closely , as the peasantry often pass off their tame ducks for wild ones ; and the resemblance is frequently so perfect that a cursory inspection is not sufficient. They can , however , be always detected by examining the *claws* , as those of the wild bird are invariably black. Many persons detect the tame ducks by inspecting their *bills* , as the french peasants generally mark them , when young , with a particular cut on the bill , to distinguish them from those of their neighbours ; and the remains of the mark , nearly obliterated by the growth of the bill , will in ninety cases out of a hundred , be discovered by a close examination of it.

are nicely roasted and flavoured with lemon juice or shickaree sauce.

The French word for fen being *marais* , these localities go by that name in France , and often extend over a surface of several square miles. To form an idea of them , imagine a large net spread before you ; the meshes of which are of unequal sizes and of irregular shapes , no two of them resembling each other : consider the thread as representing drains of from 6 to 30 yards in width, and the meshes as representing islands , in many of which are ponds covering from one to six acres of land and having communication with the surrounding waters by drains , or cuts , or openings of one sort or another. Then imagine rows of pollard willow trees planted along the drains , and round the ponds , at regular distances , which being furnished with large round heads , give a very wooded appearance to these fens ; and , by excluding all view of the surrounding country and all distant landmarks, add considerably to the difficulty of finding one's way through this labyrinth of drains , and you will thus have before you a tolerably accurate sketch of the French fens , or *marais* districts.

Many of the islands in these fens and marshes are in the highest state of cultivation as orchards and

vegetable gardens , and clearly demonstrate the vast superiority of spade husbandry over all other modes of cultivating the soil. Nothing can exceed the richness and luxuriance of the crops ; they supply the markets for thirty miles round with superior vegetables , and with a considerable quantity of fruit , consisting of pears , apples , cherries , strawberries , etc., all which must be conveyed out of these islands in their marais boats.

It is a most interesting and picturesque sight to behold their light canoe shaped skiffs heavily laden with all sorts of garden produce gliding in quick succession along these drains with the utmost rapidity, propelled and guided by women, standing in their narrow sterns , who seem only occasionally to touch the bank with their light poles . but such is the expertness and unerring effect of that magical touch, that they propel them without making any apparent exertion , and pass each other , in the narrowest places , without slackening their rapid motion , or appearing to dread a collision , which must inevitably prove fatal to their frail barks and rich cargoes.

There are also other islands in the interior of these fens of much greater extent which , being in a swampy and uncultivated state, and covered with thick sedge, present an extremely wild appearance,

afford excellent cover for snipes and wildfowl of every description, and are seldom without them.

Many of the ponds also being in very retired situations, and fringed round with deep borders of luxuriant reeds and bull rushes, are seldom without water fowl: but it is most difficult to flush birds in such positions, so as to obtain shots at them, as they seldom rise perpendicularly, but fly off, along the surface of the water, under the protection of these vegetable ramparts, and thus get beyond the reach of a sportsman before he sees them.

To these haunts the sportsman must proceed by boat, which he can hire for a trifle, and may either have the attendance of one of these water sylphs, or propel it for himself, according to his taste. He will also require a pair of *marais* boots to get through these wet localities with comfort: I have already, in treating of snipe shooting mentioned where they can be had in great perfection and upon very moderate terms.

Some persons prefer Indian rubber to leather for such purposes: no material can more effectually keep out damp than Indian rubber; but it appears to me to impart a chilly sensation which is extremely uncomfortable, and to impede the progress of perspiration which should never be checked in

exercise ; I am therefore disposed to cry out with the currier : *That there is nothing like leather.* At least for *marais* boots.

Several of the duck shooters have huts at their ponds which are built with branches of trees , generally in the form of bee-hives, having an entrance in the rear and an aperture in front commanding the water where the birds are expected to assemble , and carefully thatched over with dry reeds. Others erect fences round the edges of their ponds raising them to the height of 5 or 6 feet, and darkening them with reeds so that they have the appearance of mats placed edgeways along the sides of the ponds. In these fences they have loop-holes cut at regular distances, commanding different parts of the water.

In either case they await the arrival of successive flights , until they literally cover the surface of the pond , and then cut a lane through them with their huge *canardières* or duck guns.*

* I have not been able to discover the true extent of their greatest havoc on these occasions , and as they never (unless by mistake) tell a word of truth , I dont think any body ever will know much about the matter, but we may take it for granted that they can never do anything worthy of being placed in competition with Col Hawker's extraordinary shot, on the coast of Hampshire , in February 1847 when , with one barrel of his 200^{lb}

Those who wish to see a pond admirably arranged with such a surrounding fence , may indulge their curiosity at St-Omer by paying a visit to M^r Pierre Dewert's pond , in the *marais* of Soubruie : he lives upon the island and supports himself by the sale of the wildfowl he kills during the season.

These huttiers are scattered over the *marais* districts , and keep the ducks flying from one to another in large squadrons during the night : they get several successive shots , and often leave the killed and wounded uncollected until morning , when , with the aid of a boat , a small gun and a good dog , they have little difficulty in obtaining possession of them.

They are usually provided with excellent and most efficient decoy ducks which they attach by the leg to stakes that project a few inches above the water, leaving them at liberty to swim about within certain limits , and to clatter away without any limit whatever.

In very severe weather wild-ducks may be killed in great numbers on the pier of Dunkerque, which

gun , and a 42 oz. patent cartridge , by Eley, he picked up 478 ox-birds , and a plover , exclusive of about a dozen more birds , that escaped in the scramble of collecting the killed and wounded.

extends a considerable distance into the sea , and thereby intercepts numerous large flocks in their progress from their northern habitations to the extensive fens which lie between St-Omer and Dunkerque, and extend a considerable distance towards Cassel.

An acquaintance of mine , who happened to be there in the severe winter of 1844, killed an enormous quantity of them. He concealed himself in the woodwork of the pier , and got splendid shots at them while sweeping over him. As they fell into the sea , he was obliged to hire a boatman to pick them up and , of course , many wounded birds escaped.

The duck shooting is very superior in the Pas-de-Calais , and all along the coast of Normandy and Britany : also at Peronne , on the Somme. Wherever those *marais* districts exist , they are found in abundance.

The French *marais* ducks are considered of superior quality; and the *pâtés-de-canards* of Amiens have long since acquired a high reputation amongst gastronomists of unquestionable authority : but I confess that I prefer the ducks and drakes of my own country , and think them superior to any I have ever tasted on the continent.



CHAPTER VIII.

The *chasseur épicier*, a commercial sportsman—His mode of proceeding—Peculiar language—Has some excellent dodges—Is the destroyer of hares “*par excellence*” — Curious anecdote of a hare shot in the Pyrenees.

Having already given a full account of the French hare hunting which is so much confined to woods and forests ; it remains to see how the *chasseur* deals with them in the open country and small covers.

All sporting dogs here are trained to set hares , to run them down when wounded , and to fetch them when shot : so they must be considered as forming part of the *chasseur's* general stock in trade, and treated accordingly.

The *chasseur épicier* is however the destroyer *par excellence* of hares. He takes out his *permis de chasse* and rents a small cover as a sort of commercial speculation , keeps a regular debit and credit account of the expenses and produce of his shooting ; and, upon due inspection of his balance sheet, decides whether he shall be a *chasseur épicier* , or an *épicier non chasseur* for the following season.

Every step he takes is governed by the most rigid economy. He never fires random shots ; always takes a most deliberate aim , and runs the fewest risks possible.

If you chance to meet him returning from his *chasse réservée* , and inquire what success he has had , he replies in a language peculiar to himself , and gives you the estimated value of his game , in francs and centimes : *sept francs cinquante centimes, comme ça* , which is his mode of considering the question.

When he shoots in his *chasse réservée* , he tries every thicket , every bush , every cluster of briers with the most indefatigable industry : he follows up

all the little hares' tracks with incredible dexterity and perseverance ; and when he at length discovers the object of his search he commits no hasty indiscretion ; he carefully examines his gun , his caps , and charges , and anxiously considers the best mode of firing at it. Being in these wooded localities frequently obliged to fire at very short distances , he wisely selects the *head* as the least useful part in the kitchen , and usually blows it to atoms. The *chasseur épicier* is generally an excellent shot , and can hit a loaf of sugar , or a bunch of short sixes , at 40 yards , with point blank certainty. Nevertheless he occasionally misses a hare at six yards , ten inches. This proceeds from his double anxiety to hit it in the head , and not to hit it elsewhere. Besides the sum at stake being considerable , namely *quatre francs cinquante centimes* , a fair allowance must be made for the agitation occasioned by so great a prize : we know that the very best billiard players often miss their strokes from the magnitude of the sum at stake ; and must make due allowance for the *chasseur épicier* , when he accidentally misses a hare lying in its form , at six yards , ten inches.

When the *chasseur épicier* picks up his hare , minus the head , which becomes an evanescent quantity in the calculation , he can , at once , tell

its weight to half an ounce : he estimates its value, and settles it in his *carnassière*.* He then looks at his watch (a *chasseur épicier* who rents a *chasse réservée*, always wears a watch), and sets off for town in the highest exultation.

It is a very comfortable thing to have hares in a *chasse réservée* within half an hour's walk of the town ; but it is still more satisfactory to have them in one's *carnassière*, out of the reach of the *braconniers* ; a *chasseur épicier* is quite of that opinion.

It would delight you to see the air of triumph with which he proceeds to town with a hare in his *carnassière*. You may perhaps have discovered in your rambles that an empty *carnassière* is much the heaviest to carry : it is for ever knocking against something it should not knock against, but only put a hare in it, and it lies exactly where it should, and you hardly feel it on your back. Thus, away he trudges to town, in the confident expectation that Madame will have the *bouilli* ready for him on his arrival ; but, being a man of business, he

* But he never forgets the judicious precaution suggested by the erudite editors of the *Manuel du Chasseur* ; « On ne le met « dans la giberrière qu'après avoir eu le soin de le faire pisser en « le tenant de la main gauche par le cou et lui pressant le ventre avec le pouce de la main droite. » *Manuel du Chasseur*, p. 84.

never touches a morsel until he first despatches the hare minus the head , to Madame Fairechoses , the pastrycook, kindly offering her a preference à *cinq francs* , but authorizing the servant to leave it à *quatre francs cinquante centimes* , if she cannot obtain more. Then down he sits to the *bouilli* ; and if Madame Fairechoses declines his liberal offer, he simply enters the hare in his debit and credit account for home consumption , at three francs , being its value in use as distinguished from its value in exchange.

The *chasseur épicier* is always a *bon vivant* ; but likes to have his good things à *bon marché*.

The *chasseur épicier* sometimes shoots in the open country where he has numerous competitors, and many disadvantages to encounter : he is fully aware of the injurious effects of competition , and understands perfectly well that it diminishes his chance of a hare , just as it reduces the price of his *cassonade* ; and therefore , he exerts all his ingenuity to over-reach his antagonist. He has some excellent dodges for the purpose : he knows that a hare always prefers running up, to running down a hill , and he therefore keeps on the rising ground. Whenever he can gain that advantage , he comes in for a shot , and laughs at the gentleman in the valley : he also knows how to aim at a hare in all

possible positions ; for instance, if running straight from him, he never fires at his rump, as a London cockney would : no , no ; he has carved too many hares to be ignorant of the impenetrable shield of bones by which a hare is protected in that quarter; he therefore aims between his ears. If running straight to him , he aims rather low, just between his forefeet ; and , in case he misses him with one barrel , which seldom happens , he is certain of a fair shot with the other : when , as the hare generally runs at the top of his speed , he aims at his head , or a little in advance of his nose according to the rate of his motion, and his distance from him.

The *chasseur épicier* is , in truth , a first rate hand at shooting a hare ; and inferior to nobody in turning it to the best account. If he see a hare stealing into a patch of clover or potatoes , he does not, after the manner of some hasty young gentlemen , proceed at once to the spot , to try for him. The *chasseur épicier* knows very well that a hare , under such circumstances, is always on the watch, and perfectly unapproachable. The course he adopts on such occasions is unquestionably the best : he goes off in a different direction, and looks for other game ; and, after an hour or two, returns to the clover , singing , if he know how , and whistling , if he do not. The hare , hearing the

noise , crouches as close as possible , and never stirs until kicked out of his form , rolled over, and bagged *secundum artem*.

It appears to be universally admitted that no greater calamity awaits poor puss than a fall of snow and the *chasseurs épiciers* take every possible advantage of it ; they are off at day break hare tracing in all parts of the country , and generally return heavily laden.

O nix, improba nix, generosæ invisa Dianæ
Pernicies leporum ! Venantum ignobile Vulgus
Quam votis petit assiduïs ut cæde cruentâ
Depopuletur agros....*

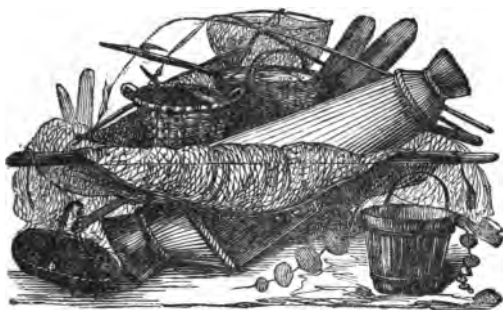
One of this diligent and presevering class met with a curious adventure sometime since on the Pyrenees : having wounded a hare , it kicked and tumbled about until , at length , it commenced rolling down the side of the mountain : the snow attached itself to the hare as it rolled down ; and , by the time it reached the valley , it was in the centre of an immense body of snow , moving on with the rapidity of an avalanche, and overturning every thing that lay in its course : there never was a more mischievous hare.

* *Album Dianæ*, par Jacob SAVOYE.

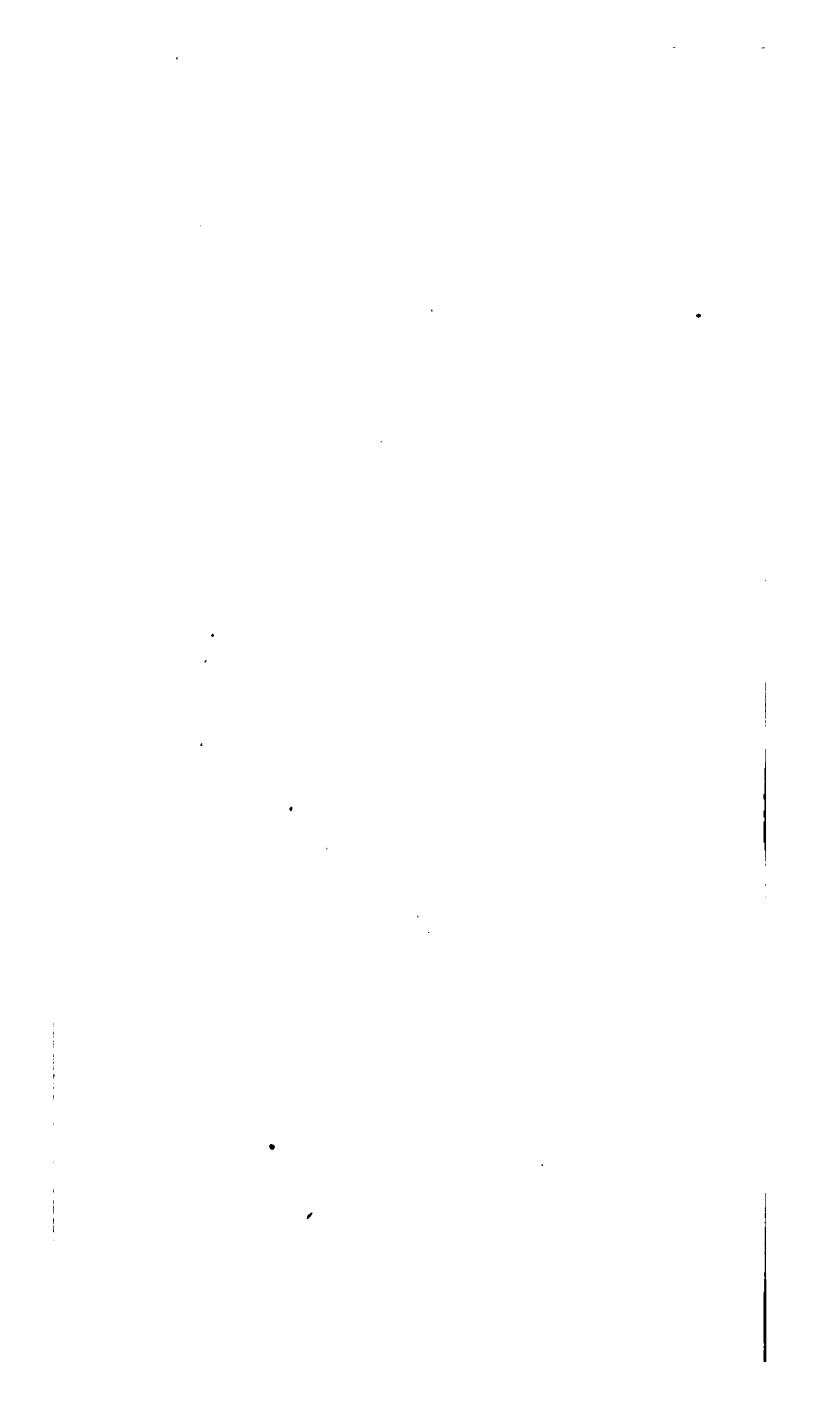
To distinguish a young hare from an old one, feel the knee joint of the forefoot; if the joint is compact, and no interval between the bones that form it, the hare is an old one; but if, on the contrary, the separation of the two bones is perceptible to the touch, the hare is young.



PART THIRD.



ON FISHING.





CHAPTER I.

Some preliminary observations — How the subject is treated—

The sabot-fisher — Parts of France referred to in this work in reference to angling.

The French fishing may be advantageously considered under three distinct heads ; namely , first, salmon and trout fishing ; secondly, pike and perch fishing ; thirdly bleak roach and gudgeon fishing.

In treating of each we shall first take a glance at the native artist , and his peculiar manner of proceeding , then consider how these waters should be fished , and finally point out the best fishing stations in that part of France which lies along the coast from Dunkerque to Brest, including the north of France , Picardy , Normandy , and Britany , all which is within the reach of the British angler at a very trifling amount either of inconvenience or expense.

With this information before him , the British angler can have no difficulty in determining what course he should pursue , if disposed to visit the continent ; and I can confidently assure him, that he shall have no cause to regret his excursion , provided he go at once to a good fishing station and do not waste his time and exhaust his patience at indifferent streams , where a never ending train of indefatigable fishermen have flogged the fish into such a state of alarm , that they scarcely venture to take a natural fly , lest it might prove an artificial one : yet such are the streams usually selected by the ill advised British anglers , who visit the coast of France , where it is extremely difficult to obtain local information on such matters.

The foregoing classification will , I trust , be found satisfactory and sufficiently comprehensive

for all fishing purposes. Who , for example , would waste his precious time in searching for carp , tench , bream , or eels , or such like plebeian fish , when he can have good trout-fishing , catch a lumbering pike of ten pounds weight or fill his *panier* with merry bleak and gudgeon ? Such proceedings are only fit for the phlegmatic *bourgeois* , who patiently , sits for an entire day , under the scorching rays of a summer's sun , watching his huge bobbing float in the humble expectation of getting a greasy bream for his supper. I shall therefore , with becoming liberality , make a genteel present of the carp , tench , bream , eels , and sticklebacks , to these unambitious artists , being fully persuaded that they will catch , cook and devour them with the utmost avidity.

I have often met them , returning from a successful day's sport with dozens of small fry stowed away in their capacious pockets , as contented and happy as the cheering prospect of *la bonne friture* could make them ; and have no doubt they will give up all claim to the trout , and trout streams , in return for my kindness and consideration.

While trolling for pike in the ponds of Clairmarais , I was once accosted by one of these patient and persevering brethren of the craft , whose plaintive accent bespoke the intensity of his alarm.



*Monsieur, monsieur, avez-vous une épuisette ?
Pourquoi ?*

*J'ai une brême énorme, mais elle ne veut pas
bouger, mon Dieu, que ferai-je ?*

I hastened to his assistance in expectation of seeing one of those enormous monsters occasionally taken in these ponds, and found him, with his unwieldy rod fast between his knees, and grasped in both his hands, pulling and dragging at something which seemed to be immoveably fixed in the muddy deep, and accompanying each tug with some (to me) wholly unintelligible flemish execration, until at length yielding to his vigorous

exertions , it gradually ascended to the surface ; and instead of *une brème énorme* assumed the familiar form of a huge sabot.

On examination we discovered that an eel, which had taken the bait , retired to enjoy its repast , in the old sabot , which was no doubt firmly stuck in the mud ; and indeed he was so well established in his *salle à manger* , we had much difficulty in evicting him.

I ventured to suggest to Monsieur , that if he allowed the eel to return to its slimy haunts , it would in all likelihood take refuge in the remaining sabot , by which means, he might obtain the pair, he immediately took the hint , and lost no time in making the experiment.

The eel as you may imagine wriggled off in the greatest delight , but conceiving from its recent fatal experience , that it might do better without sabots, was soon so well established in the weeds, that the poor fisherman broke his line , and lost all his tackle in a fruitless effort to disentangle them. From which young anglers may take warning , whenever they have the misfortune to hook an eel, not to allow it to get into the weeds , where they may expect to meet with the sad fate of the unhappy sabot fisher.

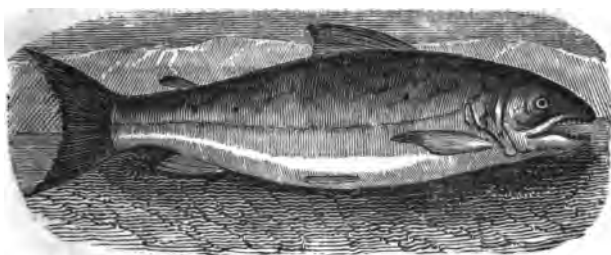
In pointing out the most desirable fishing stations

on those rivers which best deserve the Anglers notice in the several departments of the **Pas-de-Calais**, **Somme**, **Seine-Inférieure**, **Eure**, **Calvados**, **Orne**, **Manche**, **Ille-et-Vilaine**, **Côtes-du-Nord**, **Finistère**, **Morbihan** and **Loire-Inférieure**, I shall content myself with conducting him to such localities as command the best fishing in each department, leaving him to extend his rambles according to his own taste and leisure.

Many of these departments are so intersected by streams and rivulets, most of which contain trout, and afford excellent fishing (particularly in **Britany**) that it would be an endless task to enumerate them. In the comparatively small department of **Finistère** there are above 300 !

The angler will therefore, in passing from one fishing station to another, find a great variety of streams and rivulets, which, being the feeders and tributaries of extensive rivers, abound with fish and merit his attention, but which cannot be noticed in this little work.





CHAPTER II.

SECTION I. — Salmon , and trout-fishing — How the French rivers are fished — *Fly-fishing* — The most independent and killing method in suitable localities — The native artist and his mode of proceeding—The necessity of having a sufficient supply of flies—Difference between salmon , and trout flies , founded on their essentially different habits — The vulgar notion that fish rise at , and miss the fly , is a mistake—The true test of an Anglers skill — How to deal with salmon and trout when hooked—Fishing lines considered—Caution as to rods—*Dibbing with a natural fly*—How to bait with them — A curious and ingenious method of casting a fly on the water, peculiar to the French anglers—Various flies and also grasshoppers used as bait for trout on the French rivers—

A fine trout caught in the town of St-Omer on the 25th of July 1846—Monsieur Ricmaisnil's trout taken near St-Omer 41^{ib} weight—Some verses on trout—*Minnow fishing*—The tackle requisite—How baited—How to render gut nearly invisible in the water—To choose gut — French trollers — Proper mode of trolling for trout—*La truite au maquereau*—*Worm fishing*—Tackle for—Worms—How kept—How to fish with worms—Different sorts of trout—Spawning time—St-Patricks trout at Oran Abbey.

SECTION II. — Local information for angling tourists.

“ Now let the fisherman his toils prepare ,
 “ And arm himself with ev'ry watery snare :
 “ His hooks, his lines, peruse with careful eye,
 “ Increase his tackle, and his rod re-tye.”

In fishing the French rivers, anglers employ the artificial fly, the minnow, or the worm, according to circumstances; but trolling with a minnow, or a small gudgeon is the favourite, and most successful mode of fishing these waters.

When an angler has to deal with a deep, sluggish river, stealing on almost imperceptibly through a level country, passing over a loose soil, abounding with weeds and much encumbered with branching willows, planted at short intervals along its crumbling banks, his flies are useless: the finest tackle would be too visible on its glassy surface, and the

greatest manual dexterity of no avail. He must in such localities take the minnow, the worm, or the natural fly, or go without fish: he has no other alternative.

When, on the contrary, he meets with rapid streams, gliding over gravelly and pebbly bottoms, and of moderate depth, the enthusiastic angler will, no doubt, prefer his flies, and dexterous cast, to all other modes of fishing; and by proceeding to well selected localities, he will, upon most of these rivers, find suitable streams, and no obstruction in the enjoyment of his favourite sport. We shall now proceed to consider these different modes of fishing and shall begin with fly-fishing.

Fly-fishing.

It will be readily conceded by all enthusiastic brethren of the gentle craft, that fly-fishing whether for the noble salmon, or the sportive trout, is the true object of their highest ambition; and that no other fishing (even for these splendid fish) can be justly placed in competition with it. Many accomplished fishermen insist (and not without reason) that if fly-fishing be fairly tried throughout a season, in judiciously selected localities, it will be found not merely the most independent and agree-

able , but also the most successful and killing method that can be adopted.

There can be no question that , it requires much perseverance, no small share of manual dexterity, and some peculiar taste , to excel in casting a line, so as uniformly to deliver the flies upon the water with the requisite precision and lightness : nor can an angler without much attentive observation, and considerable experience , easily decide on the proper parts of a stream to fish : how rarely then can fly-fishing receive a fair trial ; how seldom are its real merits fairly tested—Yet every failure is unhesitatingly attributed to some groundless and whimsical cause, the sluggish habits of the fish in some particular river , the glaring tint of a fly or the too great length of its wings , and nobody ever dreams that it might have been occasioned by his own want of skill , his having fished the wrong portions of the stream , or his not having paid sufficient attention in the selection of his flies , to that all important consideration , *the state and condition of the water*; by which the intelligent and experienced angler , is mainly guided in all his proceedings. Nor will anybody readily admit that his failure was the natural and necessary result of his own carelessness, in casting his flies too heavily upon the water , or awkwardly drawing them

across the stream , which at once betrays the deceptive character of the tackle to his wily, watchful , and marvellously quicksighted antagonists. Be this as it may , fly-fishing so frequently proves successful even under the greatest disadvantages, that it is pretty uniformly adopted as the favourite method, both by the skilful and the unskilful practitioners, wherever there is a suitable stream for the purpose. And some of the native artists on the French rivers are the most singular fly-fishers imaginable.

They generally take their clumsy rods in both hands , and flog away as if they were beating water-rats out of the river; or hunting small fish into a net. Their tackle too is of a very rustic nature , it usually consists of a coarse line and a few pieces of gut rudely fastened together; and their flies, if I can call them such , resemble nothing you have ever seen constructed for fishing purposes.

It would puzzle the most erudite entomologist to determine what class of insects they are intended to represent. I have counted above a dozen hooks in the body of what one of these native artists informed me was meant for a *hanneton*, or cockchafer; at the same time assuring me that it was perfectly irresistible, and that no trout on the feed , would decline so tempting a delicacy.

However, notwithstanding the success that these curious and clumsy devices sometimes procure for the native artist, the British angler should procure a fair supply of Limerick or London built flies, before he sets out on his rambles.

Chevalier, of Bell yard, temple Bar, London, appears to be a great favourite with most of the anglers I have conversed with on the subject; and he has for some years, supplied me with very excellent rods, flies, and tackle, of every description.

Those who visit the French rivers will find the following flies very generally useful.

- The may fly*
- *Yellow dun*
- *Blue dun*
- *Coachman*
- *Black gnat*
- *Red palmer ribbed with gold*
- *Vermilion palmer*
- *March brown*
- *Grouse hackle*
- *Willow fly*

All flies with dark bodies and light coloured wings will be found killing on the French rivers

and as a general rule they should be dressed on hooks much smaller than those in common use for such flies, in the London fishing tackle ware-houses, indeed the angler should be provided with different sizes of each sort he selects, on hooks from n° 9 to n° 14 inclusive.

Both salmon and trout will occasionally take almost any of the endless variety of flies, found in the London fishing tackle warehouses, with the utmost avidity; and will nevertheless in the most propitious weather, in the most promising state of the atmosphere, reject the most tempting of them, (or even the natural fly) without any assignable cause; and what appears still more inexplicable, often rise freely at the fly and yet uniformly reject it. These circumstances deserve much consideration and appear to me to involve some elementary principles of extreme importance to fishermen.

Every experienced angler is aware that the habits of the salmon are essentially different from those of the trout; they usually remain in the very deepest water, the locality affords, lie on the bottom, and rise from thence at the fly they see passing on the surface. They consequently see the fly through a *very dense medium*, much affected by the state and condition of the water. To meet this difficulty, and not to adapt them, either in shape or colour,

to any supposed taste of the fish , salmon flies are constructed of the brightest colours and most gaudy appearance ; but while a large and gaudy fly is most likely to attract and move the fish when thus seen thro' a dense and impure medium , it is equally clear that it is the least likely to deceive him when he rises to seize it ; hence the true difficulty lies in adapting the fly to the *depth* and ever varying *state and condition* of the water fished. Some anglers , who would be much offended if their authority were questioned, fish in particular rivers with the same flies, in every fishable state of the water , and confidently assert that they are under all circumstances the best flies , for that particular stream. They take a hasty glance at the water and if they can see the bottom of some pebbly shallow , at once decide on trying their luck , and proceed to business, without giving themselves any further trouble on the subject. If however , we consider what almost imperceptible impurities, produce very striking effects in the transparency of atmospheric air, and reduce the finest weather, to what is vulgarly denominated *a bad seeing day*, we may form a more correct estimate of the very great importance , of a more careful investigation of the state and condition of the water , and of adapting the fly to the medium through which it

must be seen by the fish. Just reflect, what a vast variety of shades or degrees of transparency there must be, between some of the muddy French rivers, and the far famed and miraculously clear waters of the Lake of Geneva.

Trout on the contrary when feeding on flies, if in deep water, are ever swimming near the surface, selecting some particular fly or insect and keeping a perfect command over every thing that passes down the stream, within certain limits, and unless the fly happens to pass within these limits, the trout takes no notice of it, hence the very great importance of fishing certain portions of a river, and of judiciously selecting them. In shallow water the trout posts himself near a rock or stake, or in nooks, or eddies, or under the roots of trees, or in cavities scooped out of crumbling banks by the corroding influence of the mountain torrent, and from such positions snatches the fly as it dashes down the stream, with incredible swiftness; but in all these positions, he is near the surface, and has a much clearer view of the passing fly than the salmon. This is the true reason why trout-flies are constructed on a more delicate scale, and that trout tackle, is so much finer, than the tackle employed in salmon fishing. The principle deducible from the foregoing well ascertained facts,

is, that the fly must be adapted to the depth and condition of the water which being very different in different streams, and very variable in all, should be provided for, by an extensive assortment of flies, of various shapes, sizes and colours. But more attention should undoubtedly be paid, to size and make, than to colour on these occasions, simply for this reason, that it has a more direct influence on its character and appearance, when seen through a dense medium such as water. A neighbour of mine (in Ireland) who was a most expert fly-fisher, and always made his own flies, and tackle, preferred very gaudy and attractive flies, but the reason was obvious — He fished in the impure waters of the *Suck and its tributaries*, and therefore required flies of a large size and attractive appearance but the idea that the trout in that river have any peculiar taste for gaudy colours, is perfectly absurd and quite irreconcilable with the marked uniformity, and the indestructible character of natural principles.

Trout flies indeed, are often a close imitation of nature by which skilful anglers are guided in the construction or selection of them, but salmon flies resemble nothing in existence, not even one another, so infinite is the variety of them; and the angler must consult his own taste, fancy, or ex-

perience or be guided by a knowledge of those which have proved most successful in each locality. Large and gaudy flies are the most attractive, but small, sober coloured, short winged flies will prove most destructive, whenever the condition of the water renders them available.

Trout are often supposed to rise at a fly and to miss it, this is a vulgar error, and will be discovered to be such, by an attentive observer, in bleak fishing, he will see this most nimble fish dash at his back gnat, or at a natural fly if he bait with one, with the utmost avidity, turn short when within an inch or two of it, and often give it a slap of his tail. It is further demonstrated by the known fact that, both salmon and trout, will occasionally rise several successive times at a fly, without taking it, and on changing the fly, perhaps for a smaller one, will rise and take it at once—How can this be accounted for unless we conclude that on approaching the fly, they examine it, see the deception in the one, and fail to discover it in the other.

The test of a skilful angler is his success, not when they are (as a funny friend of mine describes it) *biting like bricks*, when everybody fills his *panier*. But when the river is low and the water

perfectly transparent, he must then unfold a long stretch of line, and cast his flies with the lightness of thistle-down on the water, and then allow them to sink and go with the current, so as to form an easy curve in their descent, entirely freed from the drag of the line; the flies must reach the water, before any part of the line, for if the line first touches the water the current catches it, and drags on the flies too rapidly. There must be no drawing across the stream—No little ripples indicative of their track—The slightest departure from the ordinary course of a natural fly borne along by the current will then prove fatal, and a glimpse at the angler or his tackle, will at once destroy his remotest chance of success.

In trout fishing in certain localities, the angler has numerous difficulties to encounter, he must often get his flies into nooks and eddies, and suffer them to be carried round by the circular motion of these merry whirlpools, and he must send them under the drooping boughs of trees where large fish frequently lie, to effect such achievements he must make many ingenious shifts, throw himself into very painful attitudes and often clamber into very dangerous positions, but as no useful suggestions can be offered on such topics, it would be a waste of time to consider such matters in this

little work. We shall therefore pass on to more important topics.

When a fish seizes the fly, he immediately dives head foremost with his tiny prize, and hooks himself, the idea of striking him, is mere nonsense and superlatively ridiculous. The line must be very inartificially held if the fish is not hooked before the angler knows anything about the matter, and to retain him is all that is required : the main point is to keep the rod in a proper position ; by which means its elasticity never permits the line to slacken , even for an instant ; no matter how the fish may plunge, leap, or dash about, it retains perfect command over him, and with a rod so held he may be allowed to ascend , descend or cross the stream, without much risk of losing him , but if you once lower the top of the rod , the whole benefit of its elasticity is gone , the charm is broken , and the fish is next to certain to escape.

All anglers know the vast superiority of hair lines over those made of the mixed materials now in such common use in England , which from the mixture of silk or cotton retain the wet, and rot so speedily ; yet few will condescend to make their own lines , though it would be found an easy and amusing task , and might be occasionally taken up without interrupting the conversation of a domestic circle.

To show what may be accomplished in this way, I shall mention that, in the winter of 1844 I made an excellent pike line, composed of twenty four hairs in thickness and of one hundred yards in length; and a trout line, composed of twelve hairs in thickness, and of seventy yards in length, merely taking them up when not disposed to do anything else, without once feeling that I was working out a tedious or troublesome task.

Having shown M^r Cuvillier *, from whom I purchased my hair, how to make them, he immediately took up the business, made several very beautiful lines, and can now supply any gentleman, who wishes to obtain one, with a very superior article on reasonable terms. But however durable pure hair lines may be, when properly treated and carefully kept, they soon lose their elasticity, become soft and flabby and decay, if they are negligently left in a wet state upon the reel; they should be carefully drawn off and dried after each days fishing, and never again wound upon it, until perfectly free from damp; the short stretch, usually used in casting, which is constantly in the water should also be renewed every season or whenever it acquires a soft spongy feel.

* M^r Cuvillier, 27, rue de Dunkerque, Saint-Omer.

It appears to me that any suggestions for the selection of a fly-rod would be quite superfluous , and the only advice I shall offer on the subject , is, to recommend the young angler, to go to a respectable tradesman , pay a fair price , get a good article , and take care of it , and to caution him above all things to have nothing to do with *low priced rods*, they are usually made of fresh unseasoned timber, soon warp, and then become utterly useless. A young angler should procure the assistance of a experienced friend, in making choice, of his rod, it can scarcely be too light for fly-fishing, and should never be used for any other purpose.



SONG.

Of all the angler's cherish'd store
No fish so charms his sight,
As silv'ry trout, bespangle'd o'er,
With tints of golden light,
None can within the torrent lie
With its unrivall'd grace,

Or from it snatch, the tiny fly,
Within so short a space.

Then let us seek the sportive trout
A fishing we shall go,
And gaudy flies, cast softly out,
Where rippling waters flow,
We'll try the rapids, and the pools,
And all the eddies through,
And Isaac Walton's golden rules
And Palmer Hackle's too.

Come to St-Lievin's lovely vale
A fishing we shall go,
And its bright streams, with rapture hail,
As they unceasing flow,
Methinks some hallow'd zephyr's stray
Around his holy shrine,
And waft each dreary thought away
Far far from me, and mine.

Dibbing with a may-fly.

The third method, namely dibbing with the natural may-fly, is only available during that most destructive season, when the may-fly is upon the water, and then the largest trout may be easily taken by this method.

The best hook for this sort of fishing is n° 8.

As the following instructions, given by Isaac

Walton , in his inestimable book on fishing , page 280 , cannot be exceeded , I submit them to my reader , as the best he can receive.

“ Having gathered great store of them into a long
“ draw box , with holes in the cover to give them
“ air, we take them out thence by the wings , and
“ bait them thus upon the hook. We first take
“ one (for we commonly fish with two of them at
“ a time), and putting the point of the hook into
“ the thickest part of his body , under one of his
“ wings , run it directly through and out at the
“ other side , leaving him spitted across upon the
“ hook ; and then taking the other , put him on
“ after the same manner ; but with his head the
“ contrary way ; in which posture they will live
“ upon the hook and play with their wings for a
“ quarter of an hour , or more. But you must
“ have a care to keep their wings dry both from
“ the water, and also that your fingers be not wet
“ when you take them out to bait them , for then
“ your bait is spoiled.”

Those who fish in this manner watch until they find a trout upon the feed , and then drop the flies gently on the stream , a little above the trout , allowing them to float down and to pass over the spot where he lies , without permitting any of the line to trail upon the water , as , in such case ,

the trout, particularly if an old one, is likely to detect the tackle and to decline the compliment. If neatly done, and that the angler keeps himself quite out of sight, the bait is usually very freely taken, and the fish well hooked. A long rod is very useful on these occasions, as, without one, it is difficult, if not altogether impossible, to prevent the line from trailing in the water which seldom fails to scare a cautious fish.

Some anglers on these rivers have a beautiful method of casting a fly over a trout on the opposite side of a stream, and effect their purpose with the most astonishing precision.

When this method is adopted with the natural fly, it must be put on the hook in a different and firmer manner, which is done by passing the hook into the fly just behind the head, and bringing it down through the body to the tail, in the same manner as a worm is put upon a hook. This being arranged, the angler takes the rod in his right hand, and the line, about six inches above the bait, between the finger and thumb of the left hand; and then, by extending his right hand forward and his left hand back in the opposite direction, he bends the rod into a circular bow, the *plane* of which cuts the horizon at right angles; and, by suddenly letting the line go, the rod springs into its place

and casts the fly with indescribable lightness and precision on the desired spot : it really falls like a feather.

It requires considerable practice and much dexterity to accomplish this with unerring certainty. Some young anglers commence the operation by catching their own thumbs, which is by no means an agreeable sort of thing , especially with the spring and pressure of a fly rod , to fasten the hook in its hold.

The French anglers fish with natural flies of different sorts , and with grasshoppers , which they sink about mid-water and either retain in the less rapid parts of the stream by means of a few grains of shot; or allow to go with the current : and they occasionally kill very fine fish in this manner; one of the most beautiful trout I ever saw in France was thus taken on the 25th of July 1846 in the town of St-Omer, very early in the morning, with a large black fly , the fisherman who caught it killed several fine trout in the same place , when fishing for dace with a *gentle*.

The large trout mentioned in the note in page 29 as having been taken at Mr Dambricourt's mill on the *Aa* , was taken in the *Lys* and presented to him by a friend, hence the mistake. There is no doubt that the trout run larger in the *Lys* than in the *Aa*.

But the largest trout perhaps ever taken in the north of France , was killed on the second of February 1793, at the Fontinette écluse , by Jean François-Amand Ricmaisnil , it weighed *forty one pounds* and measured *four feet* in length. I have seen a very beautiful picture of this extraordinary fish (by M^r Vanderpuyt an excellent artist) which is carefully preserved as an heirloom in the family , at M^r Picard's , rue d'Arbalète , St-Omer. There is an inscription on the back of the picture in the words following.

“ Cette truite a été prise aux écluses des Fontinettes (dans le bassin), à une lieue de St-Omer, par M^r J.-F.-A. Ricmaisnil , le 2 février 1793, elle pesait 41 livres (poids de seize onces) et avait 4 pieds de France de longueur.”

Minnow fishing.

The minnow is an excellent bait either for salmon* or trout , but the French mode of trolling differs very essentially from what our anglers term “ spinning a minnow ” it requires but little dexterity and is perhaps better suited to these

* A small trout or a sprat will be found more attractive bait for salmon fishing.

deep sluggish rivers where the minnow and the worm are chiefly employed.



Their tackle too is very simple, and deserves notice : it consists of a double hook (that is, two hooks tied back to back) at the extremity of a strong piece of gut, and two more similarly united lashed on the same gut , a little (say an inch) higher up , with a single hook also on the same gut , at the length of a moderate sized minnow from the lowest pair of hooks. A small bit of lead is attached to the single hook , by a thread of sufficient length , to admit of its being introduced into the mouth of the minnow and passed into its stomach, while the hook is fastened in its lips, and retains it in its proper position.

The minnow is thus put upon the tackle.

Choose a smallish white-bellied minnow ; first

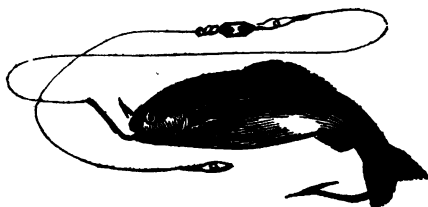
press the lead delicately into its stomach , and fasten the single hook in its lips (introducing it underneath and passing it out through the upper lip) ; then pass the tackle over its back , fastening one of the upper pair of hooks, neatly, in its thickest part , and then draw down the remaining pair of hooks diagonally across the side of the fish , fastening one of them mid-way , between the fundament and the tail-fin , and cut off about half of the tail-fin. Thus , this tackle presents three hooks ready to strike the fish : the other two being entirely sunk in the bait. The lead is necessary , to sink the minnow with sufficient rapidity , and to overcome the resistance of the current in so doing * the foregoing sketch represents this tackle and also the manner in which it lies on the bait.

If you employ a single hook , proceed thus ; pass a threaded darning needle into the mouth , along the side , just under the skin , and out at the fork of the tail of the minnow ; then attach the end of the thread to the hook , introduce it into the mouth of

* This bit of lead is generally about an inch in length , nicely rounded with an eye at one extremity , through which the thread passes , and the other bluntly pointed. It is just large enough to fit into the mouth of the minnow. The troller should be provided with several of different sizes , to suit the different sized minnows he may occasionally employ.

the minnow , and draw it down , *under its skin* keeping the point upwards , towards its back , in which it must be firmly fastened , about the middle of the fish ; thus the hook is *wholly concealed* in the bait , which lies quite naturally in the stream and the most cautious trout will take it , when he will be found firmly hooked , and cannot escape without breaking the tackle ; this method can only be successfully adopted in a lively stream , free from weeds , where a bit of lead fixed on the gut , at fifteen inches distance from the bait , retains it on the bottom , and the minnow plays in the current as if it were alive ; when the trout takes the minnow , he must be allowed line to run away with , and time to gorge it.

The following simple tackle is much approved of by many experienced salmon fishers.



This tackle consists of a large hook at the extremity of a strong piece of gut , with a small one

above it, upon a short branch line, so as to admit of its being introduced into the lips of the bait, when the large hook is in its place. The bait is thus put on: the large hook is delicately introduced into the mouth of the minnow and passed through its body and out at the centre of the tail-fin; the small hook is then fastened in its lips to keep the bait in its place and to prevent its slipping down on the large hook, when drawn against the stream.

Colonel Hawker's much esteemed minnow tackle which may be had at M^r Chevalier's fishing tackle ware-house already mentioned (page 226) is an improvement of this tackle, by the addition of the branch line and flying hooks attached to it, and the substitution of his method of passing the gut through the gill, for the small lip-hook already described. He gives the following admirable directions for getting the minnow on his tackle "first
" draw back the plummet and put the large hook
" into the minnow's mouth and out thro' the right
" gill, taking care not to tear the mouth or any
" part of the bait; then draw the line three or four
" inches to you, so as to be able to get the hook
" back into the mouth; then take the minnow
" between the finger and thumb in the left hand
" and the large hook in the right and run the hook
" all down its back, close to the bone, to the very

“ end of the fish , and let it come out about the
“ centre of the tail-fin ; then with your right hand
“ pull the minnow out as straight as it will lie and
“ press it into natural form with the finger and
“ thumb ; cut off the upper part of the tail-fin, to
“ prevent a counter action to the spinning of the
“ minnow ; pull down the plummet and see that
“ your branch line falls smoothly by the side of
“ your bait line , and if not , rub it with Indian
“ rubber until it does”. Whatever tackle the troller
employs he will find a couple of swivels necessary
to assist in spinning the minnow and to prevent the
gut from twisting in so doing ; the first which
should be very small may be placed at eight inches
from the bait ; the second may be something larger
and may be placed at three feet and a half above it,
and there should be a couple of feet of very strong
or twisted gut between the upper swivel and the
line. As the leading principle is to conceal the
tackle as much as possible , the angler should
procure the finest round gut , and rub it well with
cobblers wax until it loses all its glossiness , when
it becomes nearly invisible in the water.

The best gut has a bluish tint , and scarcely any
gloss about it , but the *dyed blue gut* is about the
worst material that can be employed for timid fish.
It is a mistake to suppose that very strong gut is

requisite for killing large fish. The angler who depends on the strength of his tackle and tries it on such occasions, will kill few fish worth catching; it is the hand, and the elasticity of a judiciously held rod that does the business, and must be relied upon.

Having arranged their very simple tackle, the French trollers drop the minnow into the water as gently as they can, allow it to sink to the bottom or nearly so, and then hold it against the current making it represent a fish struggling and unable to get on, which is accomplished, by a slight motion of the wrist, or else when it reaches the bottom they draw it quickly against the stream, when it is allowed to sink a second time and reaches its destination somewhat higher up, from whence it is again drawn up in the same manner, and so on, until some hungry trout springs at it from the bank, where they usually lie, and speedily *hooks himself*, others fish down the river, allowing the minnow to go with it, and occasionally drawing it against the current or casting it to the opposite side and working it across the stream.

For my own part I prefer casting or rather swinging the minnow underhand with as little splash as possible (which is effected by a slight elevation of the top of the rod, just as the bait

reaches the water) right across the river and permitting it to travel slowly round , until it crosses the stream in a gentle curve ; then advancing a step or two , and making a similar cast , and thus proceeding down the stream : nor do I conceive that there is any advantage in any manual effort at spinning the bait , if it has the appearance of being alive in the water , it is all that is required , nor is it advisable to remain long , or to make several casts at the same place , for a trout if disposed to feed will seize the bait at once, and if not, no contrivance will induce him to take it , besides he is apt to discover the tackle if too frequently presented to him.

But how difficult it is to lay down rules on such topics, a gentleman assured me that while trolling in the Aa, he hooked the same fish three times successively , *in three successive casts* , and similar instances of voracity are by no means uncommon. A French fisherman killed a fine trout in the river Aa in rather a singular manner , the trout had a large frog in its mouth , the legs of which protruded on either side , the tackle caught *en passant* in the frog , and the fish was dragged out , without any other hold of him. This curious circumstance occurred in the presence of several gentlemen , and was related to me , by my friend

W. C. Shone Esq^r who is himself a skilful, and very successful angler.

Most trollers have some peculiar system of their own, which they , of course , insist is the *ne plus ultra* of minnow fishing, but the truth is that , when a trout is so disposed , he will take the minnow in whatever form it may be presented to him, provided he do not see the fisherman ; and when he is not on the feed , no dexterity can move or tempt him.

When a trout seizes the minnow , the French troller immediately strikes him (which is effected either by a jerk or an awkward drag *selon son goût*) and generally conceives that he thereby secures his fish : but every intelligent angler knows, that nothing can be more erroneous than such an opinion , nor more perilous than such a practice ; a delicately hooked fish , which ordinary skill might retain is by such rough usage at once set free ; a tightening feel of the line is the most that is requisite, and this the motion of the fish will sufficiently effect without either jerk or drag. The remainder of the proceeding is conducted in the same abrupt manner. The victim is not allowed much time to exhaust his strength, but is dragged at once in all imaginable haste to the most convenient landing place and forced into a net without further cere-

mony, or held against the stream, with his nose out of the water, until a landing net is brought up behind him, when he is allowed to glide into it tail foremost, with the current.

This may appear rather a perilous mode of proceeding to those anglers who are accustomed to employ the finest tackle, and who delight in killing their fish *secundum artem*

But when the nature of these weedy localities, where the minnow is commonly employed, is fairly taken into account, they may be induced to increase the strength of their tackle and to deal somewhat less ceremoniously with their fish.

LES TRUITES AU MAQUEREAU.

A funny, waggish, friend of mine
Who dearly loves a dish
Of something *friande*, and his wine
Resolv'd one day to fish.

But e'er he started from the town
T'was his accustom'd walk,
He pace'd the markets up and down
And had a bit of talk.

And there he saw, with more surprise*

* Early in the month of March, when mackerel are seldom seen in the market.

Than I can easy tell,
Spread out before his gloating eyes
A brace of Mack-e-rel.

Quoth he, I'll have a noble lunch
These lovely fish I'll buy,
And take a glass of brandy punch
To settle down the fry.

Then, after a fish-haggish fight
The price I can't reveal,
He slipp'd 'em, clean, and fresh, and bright,
Into his fishing creel.

And off he set for *Blandecques* mill
In spirits flowing high
Resolv'd with trout, his creel to fill
And to enjoy his fry.

And there he cast his minnow in
And kept clear out of sight,
It spun as fast as it could spin
And yet he had no bite!

Till *monsieur* came, from his *château*
With *moustache* and *cigare*
And most politely begg'd to know
Vat he vas catch-en thar.

Come look into my creel *monsieur*
Behold these lovely fish

They're rather small indeed, 'tis true
But still will make a dish.

Vat do you call 'em, for one name
Do *monsieur anglais* tell,
I never seed trouts quite the same
They like to mack-e-rel.

Mon Dieu, I very glad to know
We have sush han-shoom fish
La truite (sans doute) au maquereau
Vill be one shar-min dish.

Worm fishing.

The worm is successfully employed both in salmon and trout-fishing, but will only answer as bait for salmon, when the water is very low and clear; the tackle for this fishing consists of two good sized hooks, one, two or three sizes larger than the other, and both lashed on the same piece of gut; the larger hook at its extremity, and the smaller hook, just far enough above it, to admit of the whole intermediate bit of gut lying along the smaller hook to its very point which, by its being so applied will just meet the shank of the large one. On this tackle three chosen worms are thus placed, enter the large hook into the head of the *first worm* and pass it entirely through

until the point of the small hook can be entered into the same incision (and receive it from the shank of the large hook) when it is to be passed thro' it in like manner, until the tail of the worm is clear of its bend (leaving the lower part of the small hook uncovered) and its upper part on the gut above it. Then enter the large hook at the middle of the *second worm* and in like manner pass it thro' it, until the small hook can be entered as before into the same incision but passed thro' the untouched portion of the worm, which remains upon it, and completes the baiting of the small hook, and covers its bend and point. The remainder of the *second worm* must then be pressed up on the intermediate bit of gut, between the two hooks, where it remains in a contracted and clumsy state. The large hook is then entered in the head of the *third worm* and passed thro' it until the hook, shank and all, is entirely covered and the tail is left projecting over its point.

A few large grains of shot (more or less according to the rapidity of the current) are then put on the gut at least fifteen inches from the bait.

The salmon fisher having thus arranged his tackle and bait, fishes down the stream much in the same manner as in minnow fishing, allowing the bait to describe an easy curve in its descent.

and just retaining sufficient command over his line to prevent it tangling in its progress. The fish generally pursue it, nibble nibble nibble and then seize it, and should be cautiously dealt with, and allowed sufficient line to run off with the bait if so disposed; an experienced hand knows from the peculiar sensation caused by the act, when a salmon swallows the bait, and is in safe custody, and proceeds to kill him in the same manner as if taken with the fly, the only difference being that he has a much better hold of him.

Those who use a worm as bait for trout employ a single hook (n° 8 will be found a good average size) it should be entered, in the head of the worm which must cover the entire hook and its arming, and have the appearance of being merely *threaded* on a piece of gut. Thus equipped they fish either with or without a float, in deep sluggish rivers a float will be found necessary; in shallow streams it is much better have none.

To fish with a float, cut off about an inch of the barrel of an ordinary goose quill, and about an inch and a half of the solid part, of sufficient thickness, to fit exactly, i. e. tightly, in the barrel. When you mount your tackle and before you attach the gut to your line, slip the line through the barrel part of the quill, and then put in the solid bit to

hold it on. When all is ready , pull out the solid bit , move your float down to any part of the gut you think proper and fasten it there firmly by again introducing it. It will also be necessary to have a few grains of small shot on the tackle , to sink the worm notwithstanding the resistance of the current , which always has a strong tendency to force it to the surface of the water , or to carry it down the stream , before it sinks low enough to be seen by the fish. Then cast the worm as far up the stream as possible , and allow it to descend with the current until drawn near the surface by the tension of the line , when it must be taken up, and again cast up the stream, in a similar manner, and so on , passing it thus , through the most suitable parts of the river for such fishing.

In fishing without a float in shallow streams , allow the worm to run along the bottom , not quite so fast as the current and send it thus into nice rippling streams closely connected with rather deepish water, in which the trout are lying , watching every thing that comes down and they generally take the worm with great avidity when disposed to feed.

In some rivers in Britany, and also in those fishy tributaries that descend from the *Pyrénées* and fall into the *Garonne* , when the water is of moderate

depth , very clear , and unapproachable by their banks, the worm is much used, and found to be a most destructive bait. The anglers enter the river and wade up against the current , casting out a moderate length of line , straight before them , and by gradually raising the top of the rod as the worm descends the stream , keep sufficient check upon it , to prevent its being detained by anything that might obstruct its free course , and are sensible of the most delicate nibble. As fish usually lie with their heads against the current they seldom see the angler thus approaching them, and when they take the worm a gentle pull downwards never fails to fasten the hook in a safe and secure position. The best time for worm fishing , is very early in the morning , but it will be found a successful method on all dull days when the water is in a suitable condition for such proceedings.

It is a matter of considerable importance to make a judicious selection of worms , and to have them in proper condition for fishing , which , can only be attained by keeping them until they are cleansed and scoured, when they become firm and much more lively on the hook.

Walton recommends putting the lob or dew-worm , into water for a night , and the brandling for an hour only and then putting them into a bag

with fennel, when required for immediate use ; but if for future use , the best mode of keeping them is in an earthen pot with plenty of moss , which should be well washed and have the water wrung from it ; the moss should be washed every three or four days in summer , and twice a week in winter.

Walton tells us that , “ for the trout , the dew
“ worm , which some also call the lob-worm, and
“ the brandling , are the chief ; and especially the
“ first for a great trout , and the latter for a less.”

There is also a small red worm usually found under cow-dung in pasture land , which is excellent for trout fishing.

The principal thing to be attended to , in baiting with a worm , is so to manage that no part of the hook or of its arming, shall remain visible, the worm should cover the entire , and appear to be merely on the gut.

Walton gives the following excellent directions for baiting with a worm when we fish without a float as already described : “ Suppose it be a big
“ lob worm : put your hook into him somewhat
“ above the middle and out again a little below the
“ middle : having so done draw your worm above
“ the arming of your hook ; but note , that at the
“ entering of your hook , it must not be at the

“ head of the worm , but at the tail end of him ,
“ that the point of your hook may come out to-
“ wards the head-end : and , having drawn him
“ above the arming of your hook , then put the
“ point of your hook again into the very head of
“ the worm , till it comes near to the place where
“ the point of the hook first came out , and then
“ draw back that part of the worm that was above
“ the shank or arming of your hook , and so fish
“ with it and it will run on the ground without
“ tangling.”

It is scarcely necessary to mention , though it cannot be too strongly impressed upon the mind of the young angler, that no matter what bait he employs or how tempting it may be , he must exert all his skill and dexterity to keep himself *out of sight of the fish* ; it being an indisputable fact that the most voracious fish will sometimes retire when it sees the angler , and no timid fish will ever take a bait under such circumstances.

Various sorts of Trout.

Walton, speaks of five species of trout, namely :

1° The cray-trout , being a small fish about the size of a gudgeon , found in great abundance in the river *Gray* in kent.

2° The skegger-trout , called by some the Par , which never exceeds the size of a herring.

3° The fordidge-trout , a fine large fish distinguished from the salmon by its colour, being white when in proper season. No angler can catch the fordidge trout nor can it be ascertained upon what they feed.

4° The bull-trout of Northumberland , which is also found in Scotland in great abundance.

5° The salmon-trout , of which there are many varieties , and perhaps the red trout , so common in Ireland may be considered as such.

French naturalists only speak of three species of trout : 1° *La truite* , the common white trout ; 2° *la truite saumonée* , the red or salmon-coloured trout , and 3° *la truite des Alpes* , the Alpine-trout which is a small fish about the size of a herring , and is found in the most rapid parts of certain mountain streams in Auvergne, Provence, and the lower Alps , collected in vast numbers about mill-races and water-falls. They take the fly with great avidity , provided the angler keeps out of sight , if not , they are scared and immediately disappear.

There are numerous varieties of the trout species, distinguishable from each other by their size , colour , spots, and general appearance ; and each

variety has its *standard size* which they soon attain * and never exceed.

Hence some rivers are remarkable for large, and others for small fish; and hence the striking equality in size of most trout taken in any particular stream, a circumstance which, it appears to me, cannot be otherwise accounted for.

Walton tells us that trout usually spawn about October or November; but, in some rivers a little sooner, or later; and the French naturalists say that they spawn at the commencement of Autumn, so that if anything the French, are a shade earlier than the English trout, in spawning.

There is a curious story told of a trout, known to have been for several years in St-Patrick's well, at the ancient Abbey of Oran in Ireland. Numberless pilgrims came from the remotest parts of the country to visit and perform stations at St-Patrick's well. They all saw and admired the beautiful trout, in its limpid water. Nobody could account

* There can be no question, that the author of *Pisciculture ou l'art de la Pêche*, Paris 1823, is correct in stating, "la truite croît plus vite que les autres poissons" a neighbour of mine (Captain Dillon) put some small trout into an ornamental pond, which it must be admitted, was not a favourable place for such fish, and they nevertheless grew with incredible rapidity, and soon attained a respectable size.

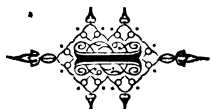
for its being there or discover on what it subsisted, and no one would venture to molest it.

It however so happened that it was once , unintentionally , taken home by a peasant girl in fetching water to boil some potatoes ; and , strange to say , escaped notice until it was discovered swimming about in the boiling water , perfectly uninjured , and as active and lively as ever.

I need scarce add that it was immediately restored to its native element , and that , from thenceforth , it became an object of the most enthusiastic adoration.

Some years afterwards , two unhappy pilgrims came to perform their stations at the venerated abbey of Oran , and were proceeding round the holy well , on their bare-knees , confessing aloud , and calling on the patron saint to intercede for the remission of their sins , one had cruelly assassinated an avaricious Landlord ; the other was the foster brother of the murdered victim : he unfortunately over heard the appalling confession ; and inflamed by the sudden and unexpected disclosure , seized a huge stone that accidentally lay within his reach , and dashed out the murderer's brains. Whereupon the much venerated trout , assuming the form of a hideous dragon , sprang from the well , devoured both pilgrims , and disappeared.

The neighbouring peasantry are firmly persuaded that the trout, though now invisible, still remains in the holy well, and expect that it will re-appear on some extraordinary occasion ; perhaps on the regeneration of Ireland.





The true source of local information.

CHAPTER II.

SECTION II. — Local information for the guidance of angling tourists in France—Rivers and fishing stations in the department of the Pas-de-Calais—Character, habits, and amusements of the people — Rivers and fishing stations in the Somme—Natural curiosity—Amiens—Importunate beggars—Agrarian code borrowed from Tipperary—Rivers and fishing stations in the department of the Seine-Inférieure — Fertility of the soil—Villages—Rivers and fishing stations in the department of the Eure—Rivers and fishing stations in the department of Calvados—Rocks of Calvados—Oyster beds—Rivers and fishing stations in the department of the Manche—Louerie de domestiques—Avranches—Its magnificent promenades—Mont-St-Michel—St-Hilaire—Traffic in human hair—Rivers and fishing stations in the department of Orne

—Its forests, lakes, mountains and extraordinary number of rivers—Rivers and fishing stations in the departements of the Côtes-du-Nord, Finistère, Morbihan, Loire-Inférieure, and Ille-et-Vilaine, comprizing in all the fishing of sixty nine rivers and their numerous tributaries, and sixty two fishing stations—Small farmers and peasantry of Britany—Their habits and superstitions—Holy wells and miraculous cures—Superiority of Lucan Spa in Ireland, and its wonderful efficacy.

Pas-de-Calais.

The angler who visits the north of France should proceed at once to St-Pol,* thirty one miles from St-Omer on the river *Ternoise*, and fish from thence down the stream to its junction with the river *Canche*, a little below the picturesque town of

* The distances in this work are given in English miles. Those on the French roads are given in kilomètres; and a table will be found in the appendix, by which any number of kilomètres may be at once converted into English miles. The fare by the diligence from Calais to St-Pol, does not exceed *ten shillings*, neither the conducteur nor coachman, have any claim on travellers; their demands are included in the fare. A one horse carriage sufficient to accomodate three persons with the driver, may be hired for eight francs per day, and a franc a day to the driver, who provides for himself and his horse, en route. A party would find such a conveyance in constant attendance upon them, very useful.

Hesdin , which is eighteen miles , by the river , and twelve miles and a half , by the road , from St-Pol. He should then fish the upper waters of the *Canche* , between Hesdin and Frevent , (a distance of thirteen miles) where he may take the diligence and proceed to Fauquembergues , if not disposed to fish the *Canche* below Hesdin.

If however he descends the *Canche* , a distance of thirteen miles and a half , he will find a noble river in which there are some enormous trout ; but , the best fishing on this line , will be had in its tributary streams : he will meet with one at Contes , and another at Beaurainville , both which are excellent.

After having fished the *Ternoise* and the *Canche* , the angler should proceed to Fauquembergues on the river Aa , which abounds with small trout. To fish the upper waters of this river , he should go to Renty , two miles and a half , above Fauquembergues : there (a little below the village) the stream flows over a gravelly and pebbly bottom and passes through an extensive tract of meadow land, forming an alternation of streams , and pools of first rate fishing character , where the angler will meet with no obstruction whatever in fly fishing. He may also proceed up the river, for several miles above Renty , where he may have excel-

lent sport. From Fauquembergues, the angler may very conveniently visit the river *Lys*, for which purpose he should proceed to Coyecque (a distance of about four miles) and fish from thence to Théroutanne, which is the best part of the river.

The scenery is also highly interesting, but not so wild, or picturesque, as that on the *Ternoise*, the *Canche*, and the *Aa*. He should return to Fauquembergues from the *Lys*, and descend the *Aa* from thence to the village of Arques, within twenty minutes walk of St-Omer.

In descending the river *Aa*, from Fauquembergues to Arques, the angler will at St-Liévin, Wavrans, and Lumbres, find favourite localities which afford excellent streams both for the fly and the minnow * and abound with fish.

Between Lumbres and St-Omer the water is better suited for minnow, than for fly fishing, and the trout are much larger, but not so numerous. I have taken some over three pounds weight in the vicinity of St-Omer.

There are however, several nice streams, fed by the escape water, from numerous mills on this part of the river.

* As minnows may be taken in great abundance in these rivers, a small silk casting net will be found exceedingly useful, and the angler should be provided with one.

There is some tolerable trout fishing in the *Liane*, *St-Louis*, and *Slack*, all within convenient distances of Boulogne-sur-Mer (where very excellent English fishing tackle may be purchased at a reasonable rate). Those who wish to try the *Liane* should proceed to Henneveux, on one of its small feeders, near the village of Longueville, on the St-Omer road, and fish down the stream.

To fish the *St-Louis*, they should go to Licques much in the same neighbourhood, and fish down the stream to Tournehem, below which this river is partially preserved.

To fish the *Slack*, they should go to Marquise, on the Calais road.

The inhabitants of the Pas-de-Calais, are an athletic hardy race, capable of enduring much fatigue and of subsisting on fare which, an Englishman would consider little short of starvation; they are also a moral, well conducted and very industrious people, and are passionately fond of certain popular games, principally shooting with the cross-bow, draughts, and playing at bowls.

They are also great florists, and have their flower shows in almost every commune. The amateurs of each class form societies, in their respective communes, and have their regular fêtes which they celebrate with much solemnity. At these

fêtes , the most distinguished member is elected president , and holds his honorary rank until there is a new election.



Should the angler feel disposed to extend his rambles and obtain some very superior fishing, at a moderate expense , he should , after fishing the *Ternoise* , the *Canche* , the *Lys* and the *Aa*, proceed to Commercy on the *Meuse* which is but a short distance from Toul on the *Moselle* ; both which are first rate fishing stations ; and though he may occasionally have the gratification of hooking a salmon in these noble rivers, I cannot promise him

such sport as the "*angler in Ireland*," describes in his entertaining work, in which he tells us that, while passing from one pool to another with his rod on his shoulder, and his flies floating in the breeze, he accidentally hooked an enormous salmon ! nor can I even upon such very high authority, venture to recommend that style of fishing for the *Meuse* and *Moselle* : in fact it is too Irish for any other country, and perhaps might not succeed else where.

The valleys of the *Meuse* are full of wild and interesting scenery, which will amply repay the tourist for his excursion.

One of the most picturesque points is above Dinant, at the chateau de Freye, where the steep hills are wooded to the water's edge, and the craggy rocks rise perpendicularly, and to a considerable height, from the bed of its rapid stream.

Picardy.

The province of Picardy consisted of the department of Somme, part of the department of Aisne and a small portion of the Pas-de-Calais.

Having already pointed out the best fishing stations in the Pas-de-Calais, we shall now proceed

to those in the department of the Somme and that part of Aisne , under the denomination of Picardy.

The Somme.

The angler who visits this department may have excellent fishing in the *Celle* , *Noye* and *Avre* which pour their tributary streams into the river *Somme*, at , and near , the ancient city of Amiens.

To fish the *Avre* , and its tributary the *Noye* he should proceed to Moreuil , on the *Avre*, which is fourteen miles from Amiens and five miles from Ailly-sur-Noye , and commands the best parts of both rivers.

To fish the *Celle* , he should proceed to Conty , which is thirteen miles from Amiens, and fish down the stream. He may also obtain very good fishing in the *Encre* , which flows into the river *Somme* , a little below Corbie, about six miles above Amiens.

To fish the *Encre* , he should proceed to Albert, which is ten miles from its junction with the *Somme* , and fish down the stream. At Albert the *Encre* is most ingeniously turned over an artificially constructed rock , and forms a very beautiful cascade. There are some very large trout in the river *Somme*, but few moderate sized fish, as it is stock-

ed with pike from the vast lakes and *marais* ponds at Péronne through which it unfortunately flows.

To obtain any trout-fishing worth having in the *Somme* it is necessary to proceed to St-Quentin in the department of Aisne ; but it is not considered a good fishing station.

The *Authie* which separates this department from the Pas-de-Calais is said to contain some enormous fish , but offers little inducement to the angler , and scarcely deserves a visit.

Those who wish to try it should go to Doulens which is only fifteen miles from Amiens.

There is a singular natural curiosity near the village of Gezaincourt in the immediate neighbourhood of Doulens. It consists of a water spout which gushes forth from the side of a hill, named, *le Pied de Bœuf* , and which rises in separate branches , and produces a strange noise in falling , which is no doubt caused by the numerous echoes , in the subterraneous passage which receives , and carries off the water.

The peasants believe that this water spout rises and falls with the price of corn ; and often attend at the *Pied de Bœuf* to ascertain the state of the markets.

It is said that this department contains more paupers than any other in France. The beggars at



Amiens are proverbially importunate : they very frequently obtrude themselves into the houses of the inhabitants in urging their demands ; and when they fasten upon travellers in the streets, seldom quit until they extort some relief. They adopt begging as a profession and bring up their Children to it in preference to giving them any industrious occupation.*

Nothing can exceed the fertility of the soil about Amiens and Montdidier ; but the farmers appear to have introduced a portion of the Tipperary agrarian code into these rich districts ; and maintain themselves in possession , by a most disgraceful system of combination and outrage. No person is allowed to take a lease of lands which the occupant wishes to retain ; and any person venturing to do so , is denominated a *depointeur*, and dealt with in a very summary manner , as a French writer tells us : *Ils sont punis de leur hardiesse par le fer ou le feu.* Burnings , murders and assassinations are the

* *Histoire d'Amiens* , par M. Dusevil , t. 2, p. 485.

ordinary means of gratifying their revengeful feelings.



But when not acting under any excitement, they are a kind and generous people, very social in their habits, but rather too fond of the *cabaret* and its deteriorating tipple.

Normandy.

The province of Normandy consisted of the departments of Seine-Inférieure, Eure, Calvados, Manche, and Orne, which we shall now proceed to examine.

Seine-Inférieure.

In this department the angler will find excellent fishing in the rivers *Eaulne* , *Béthune* , *Arques* , *Scie* , *Vienne* and *Saane* , all of which abound with trout.

The *Eaulne* , *Béthune* and *Arques* pour their united streams into the sea at Dieppe. They may all be conveniently fished from the village of *Arques* ; but the angler should ascend the *Béthune* to *Neufchatel* which is a very favourite and superior fishing station.

The *Scie* may also be fished from *Arques*, to fish the *Vienne* and *Saane* , the angler should proceed to *Guerres* , a little above the confluence of these streams and about seven miles from *Arques*.

The *Seine* is too large , and too much disturbed by navigation , to afford much fishing ; and it has no tributaries in this department recommendable for fishing purposes.

This is one of the most fertile and best cultivated departments in France , and is full of picturesque and interesting scenery.

A vast number of fine cattle are fed upon its rich pastures , and the banks of the *Seine* produce a considerable quantity of very superior hay. The villages present a strikingly uniform appearance.

They consist of a few houses grouped round a church inhabited by the Pastor , Publican , a few shopkeepers and the village smith , very few of the farmers , or agriculturists , reside in these villages. The inhabitants are remarkable for great industry and extreme cleanliness , and for having their houses neatly and appropriately furnished.

The Eure.

Those who visit this department should proceed to Bernay , on the *Charentonne* , and fish it down to its junction with the *Rille*; and fish the *Rille* from thence to Pont-Audemer. These rivers abound with superior fish.

Pont-Audemer is situated on the left bank of the *Rille* which flows through its fossés where fine trout are occasionally killed.

After having fished the *Charentonne* and the *Rille* the angler may proceed to Evreux , which is the chief town of the department : it is delightfully situated in a rich vale on the rapid and transparent waters of the *Iton* which is a considerable stream and may be fished , from thence , to its junction with the *Eure*, and for many miles above the town.

To fish the *Eure*, he may cross over from Evreux to Pacy , and proceed up the stream as the *Eure*

is navigable from Pacy to its junction with the *Seine*.

Most tourists at Evreux visit the chateau of Navarre where the Empress Joséphine resided after her divorce and acquired such well merited popularity.

Calvados.

There is excellent fishing in this department in the rivers *Toucques*, *Dives*, *Orne*, *Seule*, *Aure* and *Esques*.

To fish the *Toucques*, the angler should proceed to Lizieux, and fish both the *Toucques* and its feeder the *Orbec*, above the town, as the *Toucques* is navigable from thence to the sea.

To fish the *Dives*, he should proceed to Pierre-sur-Dives, and fish it and its numerous tributaries down to Troarn, below which it is navigable.

To fish the *Orne*, he should proceed to Pont-d'Ouilly (or to Ecouché in the department of Orne) where he may obtain excellent fishing.

To fish the *Seule* and the *Aure* and its tributaries he should proceed to Bayeux, which commands these rivers.

To fish the *Esques*, he should proceed to Trevières which commands the best parts of this river

and its tributary streams , which are excellent.

In this department, the rocks of Calvados, from whence it derives its name , are worthy of notice : they extend for upwards of thirteen miles along the coast , and afford good sea fishing , and abundance of lobsters and shell fish. There are numerous oyster beds formed at the mouth of the *Seule* , which receive above thirty millions of oysters , annually , from the bay of Cancale.

At Bayeux the hotel de ville deserves a visit : it contains a curious and celebrated piece of tapestry representing the conquest of England by William the conqueror , which is said to have been worked by his wife Matilda.

Manche.

This department will afford the angler abundance of sport.

The rivers , *Vire* , *Sienna* , *Soulle* , *Thar* , *Sées* , *Sélune* , *Douves* , and their respective tributaries are full of fish of superior quality.

To fish the *Vire* he should proceed to St-Lo and fish up the stream as this river is navigable from St-Lo to the sea.

To fish the *Sienna* and *Soulle*, he should proceed to Coutances which commands both these streams.

At the village of Agon, near the mouth of the river *Sienne*, there is an extensive piece of water containing enormous carp and eels.

To fish the *Thar*, he should proceed to La Haye, which is not far from the upper waters of the *Sienne*, and might be visited from them.

To fish the *Sées*, he should proceed to Avranches, and ascend the stream as the *Sées* is navigable from thence to the sea.

To fish the *Sélune*, he should proceed to St-Hilaire and fish down the stream, and its tributaries which are excellent. The angler will occasionally hook a salmon in this river.

To fish the *Douves* and its tributaries, he should proceed to Valognes which commands the best parts of these rivers.

This department derives its name from its geographical position, extending, as it does, into that part of the sea so denominated. Its surface is rather level and its soil sandy; but the land is exceedingly well cultivated and extremely productive.

Those who require servants attend certain fairs throughout this country, where there is, what is called *la louerie de domestiques* and select such as may suit them. It is often exceedingly difficult to procure servants in Normandy. A friend of mine

assured me that he was obliged to make up and attend a pair of horses for six weeks , not being able to procure a servant to whom he could entrust them.

Avranches is situated on the river *Sées* in an extremely interesting and picturesque country and is celebrated for its cider and the cultivation of fruit trees. It is much frequented by the English and is considered an agreeable and healthy residence.

There are two magnificent promenades at Avranches , *le Jardin des Plantes* and *le Jardin de l'Evêché*. The former is abundantly supplied with trees , plants and shrubs , and in the latter there is a fine white marble statue of general Valhubert who was a native of Avranches , and fell at the battle of Austerlitz , the head of this statue is considered a master-piece of sculpture.

Mont - St - Michel , which is only four leagues from Avranches , deserves notice. It stands on a rock , and is surrounded by the sea when the tide is in. It is one of the most celebrated places in Normandy. It is conceived that the Celts had a Druidesses' college there, before the arrival of the Romans. In 708 Aubert , bishop of Avranches , founded a small church on the mount, and dedicated it to St-Michel. Some holy relics were then deposited there and it speedily became a place of great

sanctity , and was visited by royal pilgrims from the remotest parts of Europe. After the dispersion of the monks , at the commencement of the first revolution , Mont-St-Michel became a state prison and was filled with nobles and priests ; and it has since retained that character.

This establishment is well regulated : it affords extensive workshops for such mechanics as are confined within its walls, of whom between six and seven hundred are usually thus usefully employed at their respective trades. It is a remarkable circumstance that , on the night of the 22nd of October 1834 , an extensive fire broke out in the prison , which the prisoners assisted in extinguishing , and none of them attempted to escape in the confusion. There are several houses on the southern and eastern sides of Mont-St-Michel , with small gardens (artificially constructed on the rock) attached to them , and also a small church. The inhabitants are chiefly fishermen, and take turbot, salmon, and sea fish of various sorts in great abundance. The women and children collect shell fish on the strand which covers several square leagues, and is extremely dangerous. The only safe approach to Mont-St-Michel is from Ardevon , where guides may be obtained , and from thence there is a safe road when the tide is out.

St-Hilaire is a very commercial town; some merchants there carry on a very lucrative traffic in human hair. It is both a sad and a ludicrous spectacle to behold them, in the market place, with large bags by their sides, bargaining with the poor peasant girls for their beautiful hair, running their fingers through it, and pulling it about, as if they were examining a sample of wool, or flax, and when the slow bargain is at length concluded, coolly taking out a huge pair of shears, clipping it off, and tossing it into their large sacks; and then paying the poor shorn victims, who receive the stipulated price, and depart with the utmost composure

Orna.

This beautiful and picturesque department is traversed, from east to west, by a chain of mountains of moderate elevation, while its less elevated districts abound with verdant hills and steep valleys full of wild and interesting scenery, through which innumerable rivulets pour their rapid and transparent waters, and afford the most exquisite fishing.

It is computed that there are over *nine hundred* such streams in this department, most of which

are the feeders and tributaries of its principal rivers, from whence they, in return, receive abundance of fish.

The principal rivers, in this department, are the *Orne*, *Dives*, *Toucques*, *Ouson*, *Sarthe* and *Huine*.

To fish the *Orne*, the angler should proceed to Argentan; and, after having fished it, and its tributaries, he may proceed from thence to Exmes (a distance of nine miles), and fish the upper waters of the *Dives*; and from thence, he may proceed to Gacé (a distance of only four miles and a half), and fish the *Toucques* and the *Ouson* and their tributaries.

To fish the *Sarthe*, he should proceed to Alençon which is an excellent fishing station.

To fish the *Huine*, he should proceed to Preaux which commands this noble river and its numerous and splendid tributaries.

The extensive forests in this department are said to cover 216,000, acres of land! and its lakes and ponds are very considerable.

Britany.

The province of Britany consisted of the departments of the Côtes-du-Nord, Finistère, Morbihan,

Ille-et-Vilaine and Loire-Inférieure, which we shall now examine.

The Côtes-du-Nord.

In this department the principal rivers are the *Rance*, *Arguenon*, *Gouessan*, *Evron*, *Gouet*, *Leff* and *Trioux* which afford excellent fishing.

To fish the *Rance*, the angler should proceed to the picturesque town of Dinan which commands this splendid river and its tributaries.

The strong town of Dinan is built on a steep hill, 180 feet above the level of the river, and is surrounded by walls of unusual height and thickness: its boulevards are tastefully planted and laid out in gardens, and command an extensive view of this interesting country.

The beautiful valleys of the *Rance* are full of wild and picturesque scenery, and it abounds with trout and large chub. The Chalybeate-Spa, at Dinan, is much esteemed and numerous attended during the season. Its waters are considered very beneficial in all lymphatic, cutaneous, and urinary diseases, and in any derangement of the digestive organs.

To fish the *Arguenon*, the angler should proceed to Jugon thirteen miles and a half from Dinan;

and after fishing it , and its tributaries above the town , he may descend the stream to Plancoet below which it is navigable.

To fish the *Gouessan* , he should proceed to Lamballe , eleven miles from St-Brieux : it is renowned for its linen-manufactures.

After fishing above the town , the angler may descend the stream to its junction with the *Evron* which may also be conveniently fished from this town and is an excellent river.

To fish the *Gouet*, he should proceed to Quintin ; eight miles from St-Brieux. Quintin , is built in a beautiful valley on the *Gouet* near an immense forest of the same name.

To fish the *Leff* , he should proceed to Chateaudren , which is a very neat town , surrounded by an interesting country, studded with handsome country-seats ; and after fishing this river he may cross over to Guingamp , and fish the *Trieux* , above the town and from thence , down the stream to Pontrieux , below which this river is navigable.

Finistère.

In this department the rivers *Jarleau* , *Kerlent* , *Aulne* , *Odet* , *Eir* , *Isole* and *Ellé* afford excellent fishing.

To fish the *Jarleau* and *Kerlent* , the angler should proceed to the beautiful town of *Morlaix* , which is on the river *Morlaix*. It is only six miles from the sea , both rivers are fishable at a convenient distance above the town.

To fish the *Aulne* , he should proceed to *Château-Neuf-du-Faon*, and fish it, and its tributaries, all which contain abundance of trout and salmon.

To fish the *Odet* and *Eir* , he should proceed to *Quimper*, and, ascend these rivers. The cathedral of *Quimper* is one of the finest in *Britany* and deserves a visit.

To fish the *Isole* and *Ellé* , he should proceed to *Quimperlé* thirty miles from *Quimper* , and on the verge of this department , which commands these rivers and their tributary streams , all which are excellent.

Morbihan.

In this department the rivers *Scorf* , *Blavet* , *Oust* and *Artz* afford excellent fishing.

To fish the *Scorf* , the angler should proceed to *Pont-Scorf* , seven miles from *Quimperlé* , and ascend the river , which is navigable below the town.

To fish the *Blavet* , he should proceed to *Pon-*

tivy , from whence he may fish this river and its tributaries , which will be found excellent.

To fish the *Oust* , he should proceed to Josselin (also called Jocelin) which commands this river and its tributaries. There are some tributary streams which flow into the *Oust* , below Josselin , at the village of Montertelot , which are excellent trout streams and should be visited.

To fish the *Artz* , he should proceed to Vannes and ascend the river.

Loire-Inférieure.

In this department the *Loire* and *Vilaine* are not fishable ; but some of their tributary streams afford excellent sport.

The *Isac*, *Don* and *Cher* which pour their waters into the *Vilaine* are esteemed excellent rivers and the *Brive* and *Erdre* , which are tributaries to the noble *Loire* , are well supplied both with salmon and trout. The angler may fish the *Isac* and the *Erdre* from Bout-du-bois.

To fish the *Don* , he should proceed to Issé , which is only nine miles from Châteaubriant on the *Cher* ; and to fish the *Brive* and its tributaries, he should proceed to St-Joachim which commands the best parts of them.

Ille and Vilaine.

In this department the rivers *Vilaine* , *Bruc* , *Seiche* , *Couesnon* , *Meu* and *Garun* and their respective tributaries afford excellent sport.

To fish the *Vilaine*, the angler should proceed to Vitre , and fish down the stream to Rennes.

To fish the *Bruc* , he should proceed to Thiellay which commands it and its tributaries.

To fish the *Seiche* , he should proceed to La Guerche ; and to fish the Couesnon , he should proceed to Fougères ; and to fish the *Meu* and *Garun* , he should proceed to Monfort , which towns command the best part of said several rivers ; all of which afford good fishing.



The small farmers and the peasantry of Britany

are kind, generous, and hospitable, to the utmost extent of their very circumscribed means. Their charity, too, is of a very pure and primitive character. They unhesitatingly invite the wandering mendicant to partake of their frugal meals: he takes his seat at the table, eats, drinks, smokes and converses with all the freedom and familiarity of an honoured guest; and, in return, entertains the company with whatever news he may have collected in his rambles, or with some marvellous story invented for the occasion, the truth of which is never questioned.

They are remarkably superstitious, and have a firm belief in the existence of ghosts, hobgoblins, fairies and such like matters, and an unlimited veneration for blessed wells, and druidical remains, with which the country abounds. They have also much reliance in their interpretation of evil omens. The cry of the owl, the raven, or the sea eagle, creates great alarm in their minds, and is often considered the harbinger of some dreadful calamity.

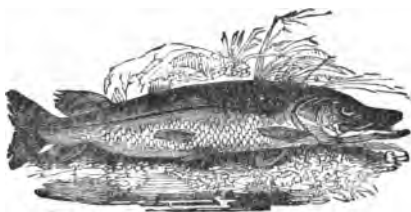
They conceive that they often hear death's carriage (carriguel an ancon), when he is going the rounds at night: and profess to distinguish the cries of persons lost at sea, in the roaring of the waves, who, they say, are calling on their

friends and relations to pray for their souls.

Doctor Granville has , in his entertaining work on the spas of Germany, fully explained their extraordinary medical powers , and the nice admixture and chemical combination of their salts and gases , upon which so much depends : but whenever he turns his thoughts towards the miraculous spas of Britany , he will discover a new and powerful ingredient in the presence of a patron saint , who presides over , and infuses his sanative spirit in their crystal waters , and who never refuses his salutary aid to his faithful votaries. Fortunately for the reputation of the saint , and the character of these holy and venerated spas , all failures are attributed to the unworthyness of the patient , and his want of faith.

Thus the fountain of Clarté restores sight to the blind ; and St-Colomban cures insanity, at Locminé , while that most useful personage St-Corneille cures all the diseases of horned cattle, at Carnac. But none of these spas can be compared to our own wonderful spa at Lucan (in Ireland), which , not only cured the poor woman's sore leg , but at the same time , darned a hole in her stocking.



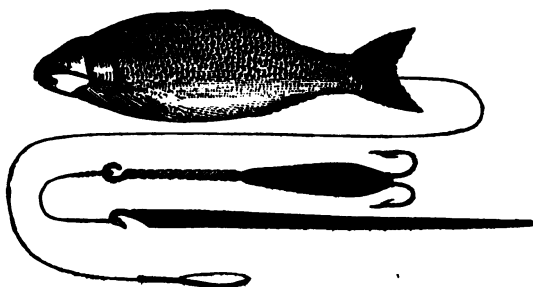


CHAPTER III.

How the French pike-fishers proceed — The best tackle , rods , reels and lines for this sport — Best bait for pike — How to fish the French canals , marais ponds , and all navigable waters — How to deal with large pike — Song , on the run , gorge and final struggles of the pike — Air, *My lodging is on the cold ground* — Perch fishing — Best tackle for , various baits used — Some verses on same — Curious instance of a perch taken with a natural fly — A pike battue — Local information for pike and perch fishers.

The French pike-fishers being in general persons, who supply the markets , with fresh water fish , naturally prefer trimmers , night-lines , and drum-nets , to more sportsmanlike but less productive

methods of killing them. Hence pike-fishing is scarcely known as a sporting recreation in France, and such being the case the British angler should provide himself with pike tackle before he leaves England.

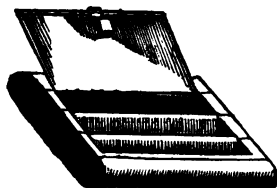


The best and simplest tackle for pike-fishing is the common gorge-hook represented in the foregoing sketch, the utmost length of this tackle (exclusive of the gimp) should not exceed four inches, as the whole should lie within the bait, and not extend to the narrow part of the fish, which it soon spoils. The pike-fisher will also require a flat brass baiting-needle, which is passed into the mouth of the fish and out at the centre of the tail-fin, the loop of the gimp is then hitched on the eye of the needle, and drawn through the bait,

until the hooks reach its mouth taking care to keep *the points downwards*, and not to rub off or injure the scales of the fish. It is also advisable to cut off the projecting fins, as they are apt to catch in the weeds, interrupt the fishing, and by creating confusion, to scare the fish.

The best mode of attaching the line to this tackle is to fasten it in the loop of the gimp, by a running slip-knot, which is easily undone by pulling the end of the line, leaving the bait and gorge-hook in the fish, and proceeding with fresh tackle.

The pike-fisher should also have a neatly painted tin bait-box which he will find a most useful appendage to his trolling apparatus. It should be



sufficiently large to carry half a dozen baits, ready mounted for use, without allowing them to rub against, press or injure each other, and

they should be kept in fresh bran, which hardens them, and preserves the scales in great freshness and beauty.

With reference to trolling rods, much depends on the water fished, but I should say that *fourteen feet* with a very stiff top joint, would be found a useful and appropriate length for pike-fishing. It

should be sufficiently light , to admit of its being occasionally held in one hand , particularly for those over-cautious or badly equipped persons , who deal out the line with the other ; as when such an operation is necessary , it cannot be performed with too much steadiness and dexterity : it should also be furnished with good strong rings , of from four tenths , to one half , of an inch , in diameter ; the more rings the better and more evenly will the line run , and the less the chance of its dragging , and catching a reed , or a branch or any other obstruction , when slackened in its course.

The reel should be sufficiently large to contain a hundred yards of good strong line and of the very best description and finish. The multipliers are decidedly preferable to common reels , it is such very provokingly slow work , getting in a long stretch of line with the common reel , and the system of drawing home a line , without the aid of a reel , and suffering it to coil about one's heels , is a disgracefully scrambling and slovenly mode of proceeding , quite unworthy of a sportsman , and in fact only fit for a sailor. Besides a well finished reel gives out the line so *imperceptibly* that it saves the trouble of dealing it out , with the hand. The pike-fisher will find a long line indispensa-

ble , from ninety to one hundred yards will not be too much , and it should be sufficiently strong to hold a fish of from ten to fifteen pounds weight , and to stand the drag of weeds and such matters.

The best bait for pike is a nice fresh roach about four inches and a half in length, or a large gudgeon which they gorge with great avidity. Some anglers prefer larger bait , and think that the pike is apt to feel the lead in small fish : but in my opinion a roach of the above dimension is sufficiently large to prevent their doing so , and is also attractive enough if the water is in any tolerable condition , besides a small fish is easier gorged, which I consider a very great advantage.

The best mode of fishing the French canals, and all navigable waters , is to try them closely along the banks , where the fish uniformly lie , in such localities : and in fishing the marais ponds also , it is much better to try well about the banks , and near the adjoining weeds , before you send your bait gliding into more open spaces , and to keep as far from the water fished as possible , as the pike is a very quick sighted fish , and from the peculiar position of its eyes , can see objects perpendicularly above it , without difficulty ; a circumstance which deserves notice (see the vignette at the commencement of this chapter) and they are much less

apt to gorge the bait when they see the fisherman.

It is observable that the pike usually takes the bait in its descent, perhaps because its motion is then so perfectly natural, or it may be that, seeing the fish ascend, and knowing that it must return, it prepares and plunges on it as it descends. Hence we should always slacken the line when pursued by a pike.

All pike-fishers know that when a pike seizes the bait, he bears it off in triumph to his feeding place, where he first plays with it (as cats do with the mice they catch) and afterwards gorges it, hence the necessity of so much line, to allow him to reach his *salle à manger* without receiving any check : as if he perceive the line, he immediately casts away the bait and escapes.

When the pike stops to enjoy his repast, the angler commences his reckoning, and allows him *ten minutes* to gorge, at the expiration of which, he winds up, and gets as near his fish as circumstances will permit, and not unfrequently finds that, after running out much line, he returns to gorge within a few yards of the place from whence he started. It is not advisable to give any jerk, or drag, as some persons do, to fasten the hooks in him, a firm pressure is sufficient, and if steadily kept up he will soon come to the surface in a cir-

cular circumbendibus sort of motion , and seldom shows much pluck after the first dash is over. But the angler must be ever on his guard and ready to allow him line for his violent plunges , from which he is never safe , until his fish is landed. They have a singular power of casting the bait from their stomachs and very often fling it several yards up the line upon which it is strung. I have occasionally seen it on the line, before the pike has had it three minutes, and thereupon wound up without allowing him any more time.

The following verses may recall to the pike-fisher's recollection , the run , gorge and final struggle of many a noble fish , they are intended to present a faithful view of the whole proceedings.

SONG.

Aria : My lodging is on the cold ground.

The Lordly Pike, in ambush lies
Conceal'd in tangle'd weed ,
And gloats upon each finny prize
On which, he loves to feed.
When lo ! he hears a gentle splash,
Then sees the gliding bait,
And in one bold , resistless dash ,
Decides his cruel fate.

Nor quits his prey, but calmly steals
 Along the slimy deep,
Where torpid carp and sluggish eels
 Lie wrapp'd in mud and sleep.
A lengthy line is softly dealt,
 While on he slowly moves,
No gimp is seen, no hooks are felt,
 Exultingly he roves.

Until in some sequester'd nook
 Close by the weedy shore,
He stops, to gorge the bait he took
 Where he shall gorge no more.
Then coolly his siesta takes
 And dreams of little fish,
Nor thinks, nor dreams, until he wakes,
 Of his empoison'd dish.

Ten minutes o'er, the angler winds
 His countless coils of line,
Until the slumb'ring fish he finds
 And shouts,—he's mine—he's mine.
Then rushing from his brief repose
 On his untoward fate,
He leaps and plunges, puffs and blows,
 And vainly casts the bait.

For still the griping hooks retain
 Their too tenacious hold,
Nor quit his vitals, though he strain
 The line unfreely told.

See how he writhes and snaps his jaws,
And shows his bleeding gills,
And aids, as he unconscious draws
The fatal drag that kills.

And now he on the surface lies
Bright in his silv'ry hue;
The rabid monster gasping dies
Beneath its victor's view.
Who roughly drags him to the shore,
To some befitting spot,
Then lifts him forth,—the struggle o'er,
The deadly battle fought.



Perch fishing.

Perch fishing often affords excellent sport, the best tackle for perch fishing consists of a good strong hook, (I prefer n° 6) lashed upon a piece of fine gimp, about twelve inches long with a large grain of shot upon it, four inches above the hook. The best bait is a small gudgeon or a minnow

the gudgeon being a stronger fish will bear more dragging and tossing about and is therefore preferable. In baiting, pass the hook, just under the back-fin, deep enough to take a firm hold, or through the upper lip leaving the mouth free. It should be allowed to swim rather deeper than mid-water, and kept clear of weeds, for which purpose a tolerably large float will be found necessary. When a perch takes the bait he swims off with it, but seldom goes far, and when he runs a few yards, you may strike, and will generally get a good hold of him.

Many persons fish for perch with lob-worms, brandlings, small frogs, and fresh water shrimps which are all good baits for the purpose*. I however have the high authority of one of the gentlest of

* It is not generally considered that perch will take a fly, but an esteemed friend of mine from whom I have received much valuable information on such topics, C Hoghton Esq^{re} was one day fishing for roach carp in the fossés about the ramparts of St-Omer, and observing a large perch in shallow water apparently enjoying the warmth of a hot summer's sun, he merely as an experiment, cast his fly lightly on the water over him, and he instantly took it. But from Mr Hoghton's astonishing success in fishing with the natural fly, I scarcely think any fish can resist him. We must therefore not be led astray by his extraordinary achievements.

the gentle craft , in favour of a good red worm , and I trust the reader will excuse my giving her opinion , and very excellent directions for keeping them in good health and condition , in the following verses.

THE FISHING LASS.

And once I met a fishing lass
Not many miles from Wat*,
And marvell'd how it came to pass
She had so little caught.

Alas , quoth she , I'm wearied out,
Fatigue'd , and in the lurch,
From being pull'd and dragg'd about
By an enormous perch.

Then tell me , blithe and gentle Kate,
As we together jog ,
What was your sweet enticing bait ?
T'was paste perhaps , or frog.

No , no , quoth she , I deeply hate
All pastes , both soft and firm,
And much prefer , as fishing bait ,
A red and lively worm.

I keep them in the cleanest moss,
And if too dull , or sick ,

* Wat or Watten near St-Omer.

I give their bed, a gentle toss,
And shake them, if they stick.

Or should they more unhealthy seem
Grow languid, or look dead,
I give them just a taste of cream,
And put them all to bed.

But tell me, blithe and gentle Kate,
What senseless fish could fly
From such an overwhelming bait,
As beauty's beaming eye?

Had you but cast one thrilling glance,
Upon that wicked fish,
You might have held it in a trance
And had a noble dish.

Or had you stretch'd that fairy hand,
Th'unruly fish to take,
It would have leap'd upon the land
And died for beauty's sake.

Yes, yes, quoth gentle Kate, so sly,
Such might have been the case,
Had I but such a beaming eye
To light my fishing face.

But no, I've tried its keenest glance,
Its brightest, warmest ray,
Without the slightest earthly chance
Of any earthly sway.

And thus the blithe and gentle Kate
Another trial sought,
Of that most sweet seductive bait
So mischievously fraught.

Oh how its melting lustre shone,
Its soft angelic light,
Seem'd kindled, but for us alone,
Amid the shades of night.

And so we stroll'd, and dawdled on,
And all the world forgot,
Until we cast our eyes upon
The noiseless streets of Wat.

'Twas there she wav'd her snowy hand
And kindly glances threw,
While kindred echoes, sweet and bland
Were whispering—adieu.

BATTUE AUX BROCHETS.

You may perhaps never have heard of a *battue aux brochets*, but we nevertheless had one of a very singular character a couple of years since, not far from the town of St-Omer, at Delehay's lakes, which are celebrated for large pike.

These lakes are surrounded by an extensive tract of low marshy ground; and in 1844 the flood was so great, that they extended over its entire surface

during which period , the pike quit their usual haunts , and scattered over the flooded ground. When the water began to subside , the more elevated parts were first uncovered , and numerous detached flashes were formed, and all connection between them and the lakes cut off. Hundreds of fine fish remained in these flashes , and as they gradually subsided and became shallower every day, but little water was soon left for the immense quantity of fish they contained.

A gentleman who was snipe shooting in this low sedgy ground, accidentally discovered the circumstance; the alarm was no sooner given than *la jeune France* was in arms , guns , swords , pitchforks , spades, boat poles, cricket bats, and everything they could lay their unscrupulous hands upon were in immediate requisition. The slaughter was immense , and the scene ludicrous in the extreme ; suffice it to say , that some cart loads of pike , bream , perch and roach , were killed in these shallow waters , and borne off in triumph and exultation by the men , women , and children , who all assisted in the indiscriminate massacre.





LOCAL INFORMATION

FOR PIKE AND PERCH FISHERS.

There is excellent pike and perch fishing in the neighbourhood of Calais , in the St-Omer canal , and in the marais ponds and lakes about Guines. To fish the St-Omer canal from Calais , the angler should go to *Pont-sans-Pareil*, and fish home to its junction with the Guines canal , which is the best part of the water and contains some very fine fish. I had some excellent fishing there in the autumn of 1844 with captain Guillaume of the 55th reg^t of the line , then quartered at Calais , who is an expert fisherman and makes his own tackle and rods.

The St-Omer canal on the Calais side of Watten, which is six miles and a quarter from St-Omer , is well supplied with pike and perch ; but strange to say M^r Dacre , who rents this part of the canal for fishing purposes , though he employs trimmers ,

night lines , and nets , can neither troll for pike , nor authorize any body else to do so , while at the Calais extremity of the same canal , anybody may troll who pleases , without hinderance or interruption.

There is good pike and perch fishing at *Étaple* , and *Péronne* , and in all the marais ponds , and lakes throughout France, and in such canals as have any connection with these localities. Most of the stagnant waters about the ramparts of fortified towns , are also well stocked with fish : but both the canals and these waters belong to the state, and are rented by persons who supply the markets with pike , perch , carp , roach , and eels , which are freely purchased on those never ending days of abstinence enjoined by the Roman Catholic Church and so faithfully observed by her zealous votaries.

Excellent pike and perch fishing may be obtained on very reasonable terms , in ponds and lakes belonging to private individuals , who have properties in these marais districts, (already described page 198) for which purpose it is usual to rent them. When thus rented , the tenant enjoys the exclusive right of fishing , and may , of course , adopt any method he pleases , and trimmer them if so disposed, to his heart's content.

Those who wish to obtain marais fishing at St-Omer , should apply to M^r Flandrin * the *garde de l'eau* of these localities. Who is well stored with information respecting them. His boat , very conveniently fitted up for such excursions may be hired on reasonable terms ; he conducts it himself and will be found a very useful and accommodating person.

The pike season commences in September and ends with the month of February though some persons fish for them in the month of March, when they are full of spawn and should not be killed.



* M^r Flandrin , 39 , Haut-Pont.

CHAPTER IV.

Bleak-fishing , the proper tackle and bait for this sport—How to proceed—Bleak , a useful as well as a beautiful fish—Song on bleak—Air, "*The merry swiss boy*"—Roach-carp fishing proper tackle and bait for them—Some verses descriptive of this fishing — Gudgeon fishing — How conducted in rapid streams—Best tackle for such fishing—Song on gudgeon fishing—Air, "*Billy o Rorke* "—An eel hunt—The Highland lass—Air, "*There's nae luck about the house.*"

We shall now enter upon the truly fascinating recreation of bleak-fishing , for which the angler



must make some special preparations. His rod cannot be too light or his tackle too delicate for this sport : he should be provided with the very finest gut bottoms , and with hooks mounted on the most hair-like gut , or upon hair ; n° 10 is the

appropriate size both for bleak and gudgeon hooks, and nothing can exceed the beauty of the tackle furnished by M^r Chevalier for this purpose.

The best bait for bleak is the natural house-fly, lightly thrown upon the surface of the water, and not allowed to sink below it: but gentles after being kept for a few days in bran, when they become clean and white, and lose the very offensive smell they always have when fresh, will be found a most efficient and killing bait for bleak. They also take an artificial fly; but never freely; the black gnat or a small red or black palmer fly, will answer best for the experiment, if it must be made, and a bit of white kid glove on the hook, will add much to the chance of success.

The angler who whips for bleak with gentles, should cast them as far from him as he conveniently can, and let them fall as lightly as possible on the water, and then draw them slowly through it, allowing them to sink a few inches below the surface, and he should keep himself out of sight of the fish, as they are remarkably quick sighted and very easily scared: when thus dealt with they take the gentles with the utmost avidity and generally afford excellent sport.

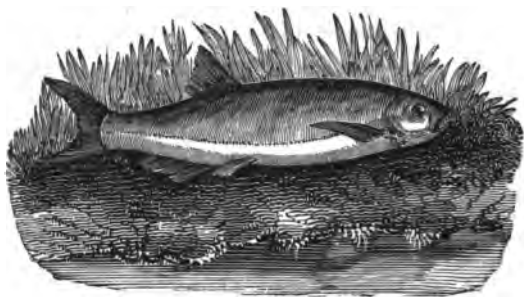
If the angler employs a small quill float to prevent the gentles sinking too deep in the water, he

may then allow them to remain stationary for a few moments, until they are taken.

The bleak is an eminently useful fish , its scales afford a brilliant substance named *essence orientale*, which is employed in the fabrication of artificial pearls , and the very best judges can scarcely distinguish them from the genuine article, with which they vie in water , and brilliancy ; so that this exquisitely beautiful fish not only contributes to our amusement, and affords us a delicious morsel when served hot and crisp at the breakfast table but rivals the productions of eastern climates, in assisting to decorate the loveliest of earthly beings. What fish then can we compare to the merry bleak.

The bleak at the commencement of the following little song was engraved from a very beautiful fish drawn by a brother sportsman , * expressly for this work , of the beauty of which however it affords but a very inadequate idea , so much depends upon the inimitable touches of the tasteful artist. The contemplation of its exquisite beauty and perfect faithfulness , suggested the propriety of the following song which, the author presents to the enthusiastic bleak-fisher.

* W. C. Shone Esq^{re}.



SONG.

Ans : The merry swiss boy.

Say can the finny tribe portray
That clearest, brightest hue,
That light, which heaven's sunny ray
Sheds o'er its pearly dew;
Or is it sportive Fancy's freak
Or some delusive sprite,
That lends, the dashing silv'ry bleak
Its lustre and its light.

Say can the finny tribe portray
In its so favour'd race,
The lightest form, the purest trait
Of symmetry and grace;
No 'tis not sportive Fancy's freak
These lightsome tints but trace

The lovely, dashing , silv'ry bleak ,
Its beauty and its grace.

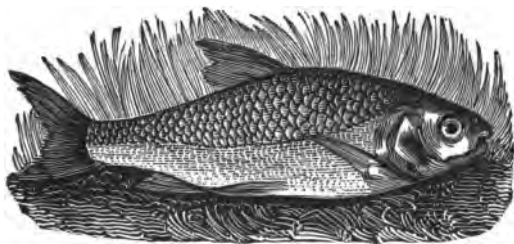
Then let us search this lovely fish ,
In river , pool , and lake,
We'll have a crisp and bonied dish
What tackle shall we take ?
No rod can ever be too light ,
No tackle over fine ,
No living fish , has clearer sight,
Or so much dreads a line.

And for a bait , when cleans'd in bran ,
A gentle , snowy white,
Will soon entice , if any can
This dashing river sprite;
While thus equipp'd , with such a bait
And with such tackle too,
No angler be he e'er so great
Can hope to rival you. —

Bleak are found in the greatest abundance in all the canals, lakes , and ponds , throughout France ; but always take best , where there is a strong current.

In the vicinity of St-Omer , there is a small branch of the river *Aa* , which flows through the extensive *commune* of Arques , which abounds with bleak , roach , dace , and gudgeon , where the angler may fill his *panier* in a few hours , and

will always have excellent sport. But the largest **bleak** I have ever seen are those in the waters about Bergues, near Dunkerque, where they may be taken, in great abundance.



There are enormous roach-carp in the fossés about the ramparts of St-Omer, which may be taken in the autumn with a large moth, or a grasshopper, dropped upon the water, and kept on the surface as if drowning. It is curious to see them swimming round the bait, with such caution and circumspection, before they resolve upon taking it, and then making such a plunge, that one might suppose a Newfoundland dog had leaped into the *fossé*. They generally make a hard fight of it, and are very powerful in the water, but seldom get off unless when they get into the weeds, which should therefore be avoided as much as possible.

I have killed some of them over two pounds

weight ; but it is necessary to have a rod of considerable length , in order to drop the grass-hopper over the reeds and bull-rushes , in such vacant spaces as may be found free from weeds.

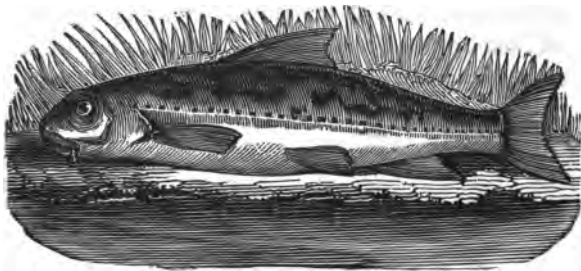
Mr Chevalier furnished me with one, *twenty two feet* long, and of convenient weight for this fishing, which answers the purpose exceedingly well. The roach-carp is a very timid fish , and easily scared ; and the angler should conceal himself as well as possible , and remain perfectly motionless , watch the motions of the fish , and drop the bait as lightly as possible on the water , a yard or so before him , if neatly done it immediately attracts his notice. The following lines are intended to convey some idea of the proceeding.

And why condemn the unpretending roach ,
Its burnish'd scales and gold encircle'd eye ,
So stealthy , and so coy in its approach ,
And yet so greedy for a drowning fly.
How oft have I , beneath that ling'ring ray
The dying gleam of an autumnal sun ,
Seen countless shoals of gayer fish in play ,
And roach, less sportful, prowling , one by one.

And dropp'd within their keen exploring sight
A writhing moth , or grass-hopper , or fly ,
Upon the glassy surface , soft and light ,
And left it there , in agony to die ;

Until they came, and circling round their prey,
As if self taught by some instinctive light
That even flies, tho' drowning, might betray
If over-rashly deem'd all safe and right.

And now they flare, and all their fins unfold
And indecisive, waver in their course
Now grow less timid, now become more bold,
Then plunging seize and bear it off by force.
And when they've got the long distrusted fly
How soon they feel its fatal hook within,
And fret, and splash, then on the surface lie
In weak exhaustion,—and are taken in.



We must not forget the gudgeon fishing which is very superior, in the vicinity of St-Omer, in the small branch of the *Aa* (already mentioned), that flows through the commune of Arques, and loses its identity in the labyrinthian waters of Clairma-

rais. It is a very rapid stream , and requires the adoption of very peculiar tackle. The best consists of a bullet at the extremity of a strong gut bottom ; to which two or three small hooks may be attached, each on about six inches of gut, or strong bristles which will be found an admirable material for such purposes , as the bristles stand out stiffly from the line , which is a great perfection. The bullet retains the bait in the rapid part of the stream , where the fish are usually collected and lie in shoals on the gravelly bottom. The proper bait is a red worm , and if too large , which is a great fault , a bit of the tail end , may be nipped off ; some of the French anglers bite off a bit, and eat it, perhaps to save time,

SONG.

ARR : *Billy o Rorke.*

Of all the frisky , fussy chaps ,
And frolicsome curmudgeons ,
I never saw , nor you perhaps ,
Such rum'uns, as these gudgeons,
They creep along in merry shoals ,
In such a mixum gath'r'em ,
One grabs a worm , as on it rolls ,
And all the rest gol eath'r him.

Then let us in yon rapids fish,
With steady bullet tackle,
We'll catch a most splendacious dish,
Of tempting crisp and crackle.

The moment we cast in a bait,
And sink it with our bullet,
They snatch it up, as sure as fate
And lug, and drag, and pull it,
And while we lift the dripping line,
Oh how they dance upon it,
And kick and splash and sparkling shine
Like love-beams round a bonnet.

Then let us in yon rapids fish,
With steady bullet tackle,
We'll catch a most splendacious dish
Of tempting crisp and crackle.

And when collected in a creel
And huddled all together
How very much they make it feel
Too cumbrous for hot weather
But soon we reach the wish'd for goal
The moral of our fable
And have them ev'ry mother's soul
Sent broiling hot to table

Then let us in yon rapids fish
With steady bullet tackle
We'll have a most splendacious dish
Of tempting crisp and crackle.



An Eel-Hunt.

Two juvenile anglers were one morning at M^r Delehay's celebrated lakes (to use Master Frankie's hyperbolical language) *tearing out big fish*, when an ill-timed thunder-storm terminated their amusement; but not before Master Frankie caught an enormous eel, nearly as long as himself.

When they reached the town of S'-Omer the rain was falling thickly and heavily, and the water was rushing down the polished pavements of its narrow streets in rapid torrents.

Having arrived at one, which was nearly impassable, Boz clambered over, and Frankie slung his *panier* after him with considerable adroitness. He then commenced cautiously balancing and swinging his own to and fro (pendulum-like), to gain sufficient impetus for the safe transit of its precious contents: but, alas! when just parting with his

boasted prize , his foot slipped , and all tumbled into the rapid stream , and away went the *panier* , *en route* for the troubled waters of the *Aa*.

The eel , roused from its torpor , put out its head... What a moment for poor Frankie , whose heart and soul were in his enormous eel ! It was more than he could endure... He plunged in on one side ; Boz plunged in on the other ; and the eel slipped quietly out of the *panier* into its native element.

A numerous school was just passing : boys will be boys... All joined in the chase ; and , although they overtook , and frequently got hold of the eel , in shallow places , it always slipped through their hands ; and , after many a narrow escape , dropped with a heavy splash into the rapid waters of the *Aa* , and was soon borne back to its old haunts where , no doubt , it gave a curious account of its short , but eventful , visit to S'-Omer.



SONG.

THE HIGHLAND LASS.

Air. There's nae luck about the house.

So granny 's doing all she can
By ev'ry artful hitch,
And ev'ry, thoughtless cruel plan,
To spiflicate my itch,
For there's nae lass in Inverness,
In mountain, heath, or dell,
Who boasts of so much itchiness,
Or scratches half so well.

Should Doctor Brimstone visit here,
Or dare to raise the latch,
I'll never touch his filthy gear,
I glory in a scratch,
For there's nae lass in Inverness,
In mountain, heath, or dell,
Who could endure its filthiness,
Or tolerate its smell.

I'll cast his medicines far away,
I'll curse him for a tease,
I'll tear away, throughout the day,
And lie amongst the fleas,
For there's nae lass in Inverness,
In mountain, heath, or dell,

Who doats so upon itchiness,
Or scratches half so well.

Had Doctor Brimstone been a beau
'Twere quite another thing ,
As lovers' smiles , where'er they go ,
Such soothing comfort bring ,
For there's nae lass in Inverness ,
In mountain , heath , or dell ,
Whose heart with love and tenderness,
Can palpitate so well.

And why shall I not have my scratch
If history speak true
King George declar'd its joys a match
For all the rest he knew
And there's nae lass in Inverness
In mountain, heath , or dell
Who could with native simpleness
A truer story tell.

The Highland lass is right—George the third is said to have declared that “ scratching where one is itchy, is too great a luxury for a subject and fit only for a king.”



APPENDIX

A SKETCH OF THE GAME LAWS OF FRANCE ,

Promulgated 3^d May 1844.

It is provided by the game laws of France , that the Prefets of the several Departments shall determine , by formal decrees , duly promulgated , at least 10 days before the time , the precise day on which the *chasse* shall be opened , and the day on which it shall be closed : and both hunting and shooting are strictly prohibited : save , *while the chase is opened*.

It is also provided that the Prefets shall , upon the application of the Mayor of the commune , in which the applicant resides , grant a *permis de chasse* (except to certain disqualified persons) , for which 15 francs are payable to the state , and 10 francs to the commune ; and that such *permis de chasse* shall confer the personal privilege of *hunting and shooting* throughout the entire kingdom of France , for the term of one whole year , to be computed from the day of its date.

ARTICLES 4 , 3 AND 5.

It is further provided that it shall not be lawful to hunt , or shoot , on the property of another without his consent.

ARTICLE 4.

It is also provided that the Prefets shall determine : 1^o The proper time for shooting birds of passage (except quails), and water-fowl ; 2^o the time during which water-fowl may be shot in the marais districts, and upon ponds and rivers ; and 3^o The

noxious animals that the proprietors and farmers may destroy at all seasons on their lands.

It is also provided that the *Prefets* shall make proper regulations : 1° To prevent the destruction of birds ; 2° To authorise the use of greyhounds in the destruction of noxious animals ; and 3° To prevent hunting and shooting while the ground is covered with snow.

ARTICLE 9.

Persons guilty of offences against these laws are punishable by fine and imprisonment , and the confiscation of the gun , nets , engines and other implements employed , according to the circumstances of the case.

ARTICLES 11, 12, 13 AND 16.

Rewards are given for convictions , which are paid out of the fines imposed , and the remainder , goes to the *commune* where the offence was committed ; and it is expressly provided that *no extenuating circumstances* shall be taken into consideration, but that the law shall be rigorously enforced. (See note page 47 for a case in explanation of this provision).

ARTICLES 19 AND 20.

It is further provided , for the preservation of game , that it shall be unlawful to buy, sell, or possess game, whilst the *chasse* is closed , or to take or destroy the eggs, or young, of pheasants, partridges or quails ; and persons guilty of offences , under this article , are punished by fine and imprisonment.

ARTICLE 4.

PISCATORY LAWS.

15 avril 1829.

By these laws , the right of fishing is reserved for the benefit

of the state ; 1° in all rivers, canals, and public waters, which are navigable or floatable with boats or rafts ; and which are maintained at the expense of the government ; 2° in all waters connected with such rivers, canals, etc., which are in like manner maintained at the expense of the government.

TITLE 4, ARTICLE 8.

And the exclusive right of fishing in these canals, rivers and waters (subject to the following reservation) is enjoyed by persons who rent them from the state, for fishing purposes, and supply the markets with fresh water fish.

Nevertheless all persons are authorised to fish with a floating line (à la ligne flottante) in all the rivers, canals and waters belonging to the state, except during the spawning season.

TITLE 4, ARTICLE 5.

It is under this express reservation in favour of angling *à la ligne flottante*, that the British angler is entitled to fish in these waters, without the consent of the persons who rent them from the state.

Fishing *à la ligne flottante* means fishing without a *sink* attached to the tackle, and thus in strictness float fishing (with lead or shot attached to the line) is not warranted by the foregoing reservation, though it is the mode uniformly adopted by the French anglers, and may, therefore, be considered within the scope of the reservation for all practical purposes.

In all other rivers and canals, the proprietors of the adjoining lands have the right of fishing on their respective sides, to the middle of the water.

TITLE 4, ARTICLE 5.

Persons fishing without permission are punishable by fine of from 20 to 400 francs, and the forfeiture of their rods, nets, etc.; besides being responsible for any special damage done.

It is right to observe that few proprietors perserve their fish, and that the fishing in trout rivers , etc., is sufficiently opened for all sporting purposes : but whenever the angler finds the words *pêche réservée* posted up , he should respect them , and go elsewhere.

There are numerous provisions for the preservation of fish during the spawning season , and to prevent the use of destructive nets , and the killing of fish under certain specified sizes ; but the angler has nothing to do with these restrictions , and is always glad to see them rigorously enforced. They, therefore , need not be noticed.



A TABLE

of kilomètres reduced to English miles , quarters of miles , and yards , for the convenience of tourists :

The English mile contains 1760 yards.

» Irish » » 2240 »

Kilomètres.	English miles.	Quarters.	Yards.
1	0	2	212
2	1	0	425
3	1	3	197
4	2	1	410
5	3	0	180
6	3	2	395
7	4	1	168
8	4	3	380
9	5	2	153
10	6	0	425
20	12	1	291
30	18	2	217
40	24	3	143
50	31	0	69
100	62	0	138

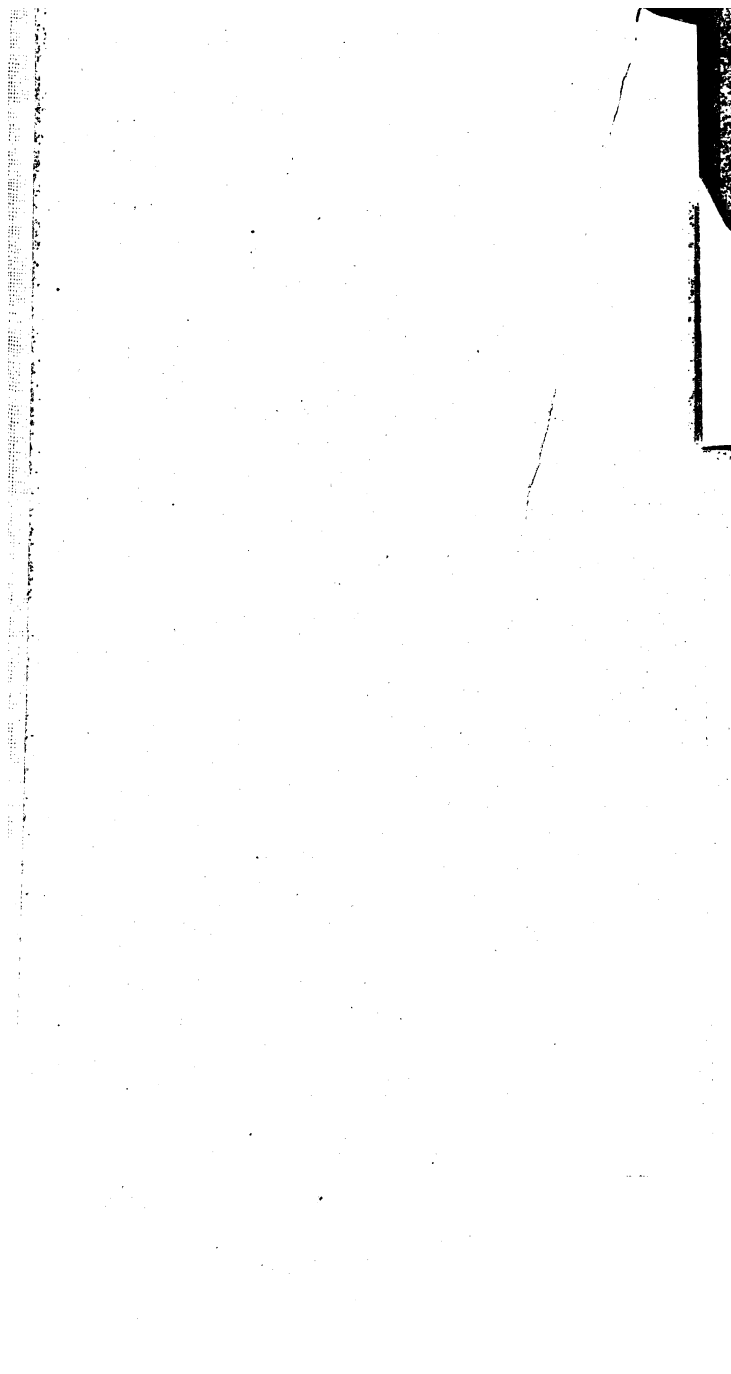
The difference between the Irish and the English mile arises, from the difference between the Irish and English perch, there being 320 perches in the mile, in each Country, but the Irish perch contains seven yards, while the English perch only contains five yards and a half.

The proportion between them is therefore *as eleven to fourteen*. A kilomètre only exceeds half a mile Irish by *twenty eight yards*.

22.

7 m







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